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Becoming Special

Occupational socialisation in volunteer police officers

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law

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Author’s declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ..... DATE:.....

Abstract

This thesis takes as its site of interest the office of the Special Constabulary. Through this institution it is possible to volunteer to join the police and serve as a warranted officer, with the full range of legal authorities that are invested in those who work within the 'regular' ranks. The study applies its focus to the training and early career development of Special Constables, aiming to fill a significant gap in the contemporary literature.

Utilising conceptual models from studies of regular officer training and development, the thesis will explore this field of interest as a process of socialisation, in which learning how to become a Special Constable requires engaging with formal and informal aspects of the organisation. Although Special Constables do not 'belong' to the occupational culture of policing in the same way that regular officers do, this study explores the extent to which the occupational culture is extended to them by those regular officers in charge of their induction. It also explores the extent to which that culture is accessible to volunteer officers, and the types of professional identity it allows them to sustain.

It will be suggested that the socialisation experiences of Special Constables are helpfully explored and interrogated using a framework of needs fulfilment, which supplies the dynamic of their quest to achieve membership status. However, membership can be achieved in different degrees, relating to the trainee's motivations and expectations for undertaking the role, and their levels of success at finding a fit with the occupational culture.

This thesis was undertaken utilising a range of qualitative research methods, including the autoethnographic participation in the field by the author. The following exploration brings the voices of trainees to the fore and seeks to deliver grounded insight and analysis on this sheltered area of practice.

Acknowledgements

All research projects rely on numerous people for advice and support, and this thesis is no exception. I should start by thanking the Economic and Social Research Council who funded my doctoral studies, having already funded my M.Sc. Without them none of this would have been possible.

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Additionally, I am very grateful to both the Law School and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law research ethics committees, who were open to this somewhat unconventional project and provided much support and direction.

Family and friends will no doubt be much relieved to (hopefully) see this thesis one day bound and laid to rest (of sorts). You never gave up, and neither did I, taking your lead. To my wonderful wife and darling daughter, I should have finished this long ago, I know. Thank you for waiting me out and keeping me going.

This thesis could only have proceeded with the agreement of the force in question, 'Westshire Constabulary', to whom I am incredibly indebted, and much appreciative of their willingness to entertain this novel approach. Beyond the granting of access, immense gratitude is also owed and felt to all those officers, from the regular ranks and the Special Constabulary, who contributed to this project in myriad ways. But to Cheese and Ham, most of all.

Finally, to the statistician from the policing conference on Teeside, whose name I forget, with the pony tail and the motorbike, who told me that no-one ever submits their thesis after going part-time and then suspending their studies: thank you for motivating me to be the outlier in your data set.

TT

For my two favourite ladies

One who did everything to try and help me finish this, and one who did everything to try and distract me – in the best possible way.

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On the ride back to custody, all of us in the van were subjected to repeated abuse from a drunken and antsy prisoner in the cage that had been arrested by another officer. One of his lines of thought was that we'd all lose our jobs because of our involvement in his illegal arrest. This was pressed upon us several times, interspersed with assurances that he would fuck us up when we opened the door at the other end, and regular proclamations that we were all fucking cunts. He can't lose his job, one of the officers said (referring to me). He's a volunteer. This instigated a volley of chuckles from all the officers in the van, including me. I don't think our man in the back even twigged, but it didn't matter. Later on, Ellis declared that it was the 'best comment of the night'. [Fieldnotes]

Chapter 1

Introduction

Training and retaining a Special kind of volunteer

This thesis is about people volunteering to undertake a unique position – a Special position – and about the ways in which they, with others, seek to develop competence in meeting its demands. It is a study about the experience and affects of a process of socialisation within a legal institution, and the construction of an inherently contested identity. The site of interest for this study is the office of the Special Constabulary; a national institution incorporated within the sanctioned policing response of the state. Through this organisation, it is possible to volunteer to be trained and deployed as a warranted, yet unpaid, police officer – to don a police uniform and enter the public domain, equipped with handcuffs, baton, and incapacitant spray, and invested with the same legal powers and authorities imparted upon 'regular' officer counterparts.

In the contemporary climate of state retrenchment and budgetary restrictions, and subsequent requirements for operational reorganisation, the office has come to the fore as a potential means to strengthen the provision of policing services (Bullock and Leeney, 2016). Yet as a body of legal actors, the Special Constabulary had until very recently received minimal scholarly attention. The research field is now expanding. This project will contribute to this momentum, directing its focus to an area of this field which is still comparatively unaddressed in the literature; the training and early career development of volunteer officers. Conducted in large part by my personal submission to this process of induction within a police force in the West of England, this study will attempt to break new ground by capturing and re-presenting something of the particular social world within which these volunteers learn how to operate. It aims to go beyond the caricature or 'spitting image' view of the policing world, and the individuals that constitute it, by placing trainee Specials centre stage and promoting their voices through the text (Fielding, 1988: viii). With the existing literature offering little insight or analysis on the processes and lived experiences which characterise their unique course of learning, it is contended that this exploratory qualitative study will address an

important lacuna in recent research on the field. It will also provide a compelling socio-legal account of how volunteers experience induction and attempt to master competency within a legal institution. In doing so it also hopes to enliven the policing studies literature with contemporary first-hand accounts about life on the ground.

Situating the Special Constabulary

The Special Constabulary is often described as the bridge between the police and the community; the embodiment of the active citizenry (Bullock and Leeney, 2016). The institution has a lengthy history as part of the extended police family, with its official inception usually dated to the Special Constables Act 1831, although the office can be traced back in various forms to the mid-1600s (Leon, 1989). Whilst it has long been recognised as an important resource for contributing to the delivery of policing functions, with sustained governmental interest in recruitment since the 1970s, the past decade has seen a renewed focus on the Special Constabulary (Bullock and Leeney, 2016). As public spending cuts have impacted and the number of 'regular' police officers (henceforth regulars) has declined, there have been major increases in the number of Special Constables (henceforth Specials) being trained and deployed, as the Home Office and individual Constabularies alike seek to maximise the deployment of what is seen as a cost-effective resource. Likewise, many Police and Crime Commissioners have been quick to back the Special Constabulary since coming into post, swiftly implementing schemes to attempt to increase the roll-out of these unpaid frontline operatives (Whittle, 2017). Within this period, the number of Specials peaked in 2011/2012, with over 20,000 operating across England and Wales, representing 15% as a proportion of the regular workforce at that time (Whittle, 2017), and doubling the overall size of the Constabulary in 2004 (Bullock and Leeney, 2016). However, recent years have seen a dramatic reversal of this trend. Statistics show only 11,992 Specials as operational in March 2018, a reduction of 13.2% over the preceding 12 months, and now equating to 9.5% as a relative proportion of the regulars (Hargreaves et al., 2018).

Notwithstanding the significance and implications of such trends (discussed below), the Special Constabulary still has the capacity to substantially contribute to the provision of policing services. This reliance on pro bono policing is an extremely important one to explore and understand. If the

current numbers of Specials are amalgamated with regulars (n= 137643), approximately 1 in 11 police officers (8.7%) in England and Wales is a volunteer, balancing their hours in uniform with the myriad of contingent commitments that each person brings to an experience of giving up their time for free.

Research on the Special Constabulary

At the outset of this research project, the extant literature on the Special Constabulary was extremely limited. A small number of contributions had sought to chart its historical context (Leon, 1989; Leon, 1990; Seth, 1961), whilst a number of other studies had periodically reviewed various aspects of the volunteering experience, including recruitment, training, deployment, management, and retention/attrition (Gill and Mawby, 1990; Leon, 1991; Mirrlees-Black and Byron, 1994; Gaston and Alexander, 2001). However, in the years between conceiving this project and bringing it to a conclusion, there has been an exponential increase in academic attention towards the Special Constabulary, substantially updating and extending the previous research picture. Policy makers and practitioners are now much better informed on a range of matters, including retention and wastage (Whittle, 2014; Whittle, 2017), motivations for volunteering (Pepper, 2014; Hieke, 2017b; Callender et al., 2018), operational confidence (Wolf et al., 2016), diversity and representation (Bullock, 2015; Hieke, 2017), training needs (Chandan and Meakin, 2016; Straine-Francis, 2017; Britton et al., 2018), and management and deployment (Bullock and Leeney, 2016; Britton and Callender, 2017).

The current research picture is not yet comprehensive, but it is considerable, and will be referenced throughout this thesis. Studies repeatedly reveal a misunderstanding behind the positive proclamations often made towards the Special Constabulary by national leads and individual forces as a value-adding institution; both in terms of increasing community engagement and representation in policing provision, and in terms providing value for money in times of fiscal constraint (Bullock and Leeney, 2016). There appears to be a failure at the organisational level to recognise that this is not always the case, and to take measures to address this as suggested by the growing evidence base. For instance, both Bullock (2015) and Hieke (2017) have questioned the extent to which the Special Constabulary is more inclusive of under-represented groups, such as

females and BME communities. Several studies have also highlighted the diverse range of motivating factors that draw people to the volunteering experience (Hieke, 2017b). Significant numbers of applicants are primarily attracted to the role as a stepping-stone to regular recruitment, as opposed to contributing to their communities through public service (Pepper, 2014; Hieke, 2017b; Callender at al., 2018). Similarly, the championing of the Special Constabulary as a cost-effective supplement to regular workforce numbers belies an understanding of the cost implications of training, maintaining, and retaining a volunteer workforce (Whittle, 2014; Whittle, 2017). With consistently significant wastage and attrition rates undermining progress in this regard, as the current numbers demonstrate, the research has explored a plethora of factors linked to consolidating service levels, including management and supervision, deployments and skill sets, and morale (Britton and Callender, 2017; Callender et al., 2018). As Hieke summarises, 'recent declines in service strength point to the underlying fragility of the Special Constabulary as a police reserve, placing increased prominence on both the volunteer experience, as well as strategies designed to increase retention rates' (2017:75).

Exploring the bounds of that experience reveals that Specials are an inherently complex and challenging group of volunteers to cater for. Bullock and Leeney conceptualise the difficulties for policing organisations in overseeing this volunteer workforce as matters of balance (2016). How do forces balance the range of motivations that Specials bring to the experience, and their correspondingly diverse range of aspirations for the role? How do forces ensure the operational competence of these part-time officers, and yet acknowledge the competing demands of their lives outside of the role? How do forces construct and develop effective management structures from within the volunteer ranks? And how do forces balance the need to ensure volunteers feel valued and incorporated within the policing fold, whilst considering the effects that pluralising service delivery may have on the regular workforce? It is contended that the initial training and development of Specials is central to many of these matters of balance, and it is to this aspect of the volunteer experience that this thesis will apply its focus.

Training programmes and operational competence

To add some conceptual clarity, for the remainder of the thesis the 'training programme' that Specials undergo will be designated into two 'phases'. The first phase of the programme involves a period of classroom learning at a training facility where trainee Specials (henceforth trainees) are given a basic grounding in police powers and procedures. This will be referred to as the 'academy phase'. The second phase involves a period of accompanied patrol, or 'field training', where trainees are deployed to a station and work alongside a tutor (usually a regular but sometimes a more experienced Special). This will be referred to as the 'tutorship phase'. Assisted with attempting to convert their classroom learning into practice, trainees are expected to gradually demonstrate a level of operational competence during this probationary period. If they are successful at this, they are 'signed off' and authorised to patrol independently, or 'go solo'. This represents the end of the training programme.

Training programmes for Specials have advanced substantially since Mirrlees-Black and Byron (1994) assessed the field and found significant variation between forces, and even locally within some forces. Their research revealed great disparities regarding the structure and length of initial training requirements, and similarly, very differing perspectives on the management of subsequent field training (and beyond). The picture is more uniform today, although degrees of variation persist in how forces design and deliver training to volunteer officers across England and Wales (Britton et al., 2017).

Most forces subscribe to the requirements of a standardised national programme of learning called the 'Initial Learning for Special Constables' (IL4SC), with the College of Policing providing guidance and supporting material (Wolf et al., 2017). Within this, mandatory training modules are delivered during the academy phase in line with the Police National Curriculum, alongside optional units chosen at a local level, and induction sessions on local force systems and procedures. Trainees will also be expected to complete preparatory self-study learning outside of the classroom during this phase, or in advance of it. Some forces deliver their training sessions in block weeks, whereas others combine weekend and evening learning (Wolf at al., 2017). At the end of the academy phase trainees are 'attested' (sworn into office by a magistrate) and given their warrant cards.

During the subsequent tutorship phase of accompanied patrol, trainees are usually expected to complete a 'learning and assessment portfolio'. Within this portfolio are several 'Police Action Checklists' (PACs) which designate core procedural processes and operational capabilities, such as 'utilise force information management systems' and 'demonstrate ability to minimise and deal with aggressive and abusive behaviour'. Trainees must also evidence behaviours outlined in an 'integrated competency framework', such as 'effective communication', 'problem solving', and 'resilience'. Once these requirements have been achieved, the portfolio is reviewed by a designated officer, and the trainee is then 'confirmed in post' and authorised for independent patrol as operationally competent.

In the chapters that follow, I will explicate in detail the features of the training programme employed by the force under study. These are broadly similar to the majority of programmes offered by the other 42 forces in England and Wales, although differences will be noted where they arise.

Why study training and early career development?

Focussed attention on the training and early career development of Specials is absent from the current research picture, although some studies have started to probe the edges of the topic. I will set out four key reasons as to why this area needs a dedicated exposition.

1) It is argued that Specials are an especially interesting group for several reasons. For one thing, their volunteering bestows significant and unique forms of social and legal capital, especially considered within the context of other volunteering projects and positions, both inside and beyond the criminal justice system (Britton et al., 2018). How they come to understand and deploy this capital is an important issue to contemplate for those interested in how certain groups of people attain and handle legal authority within our society. This is especially the case as Specials are able, once authorised, to patrol independently of their regular colleagues, without their direct support or oversight. Linked to this uniqueness in status is the exceptionality of the requirements that they submit to as volunteers, undertaking a role (as police officers) which will may place them in situations of danger and stress, and imparts significant levels of social responsibility. How volunteers learn to react

and respond to such demands has significant implications for the policing response offered by the state.

2) Whilst it is important to understand the ways in which Specials are prepared to handle the social and legal responsibilities attached to their role, it is also important to reference the place of police officer training as central to the contemporary professionalisation agenda, and to try and situate the training of volunteers within this. Much has been made of the significance of police training as a (potential) vehicle for delivering cultural change and driving the professionalisation of the modern police force (Fielding, 1988; Chan, 1996; Chan, 2003; Heslop, 2011). The initial training of regulars was substantially revised as part of this agenda in the mid-2000s, with a renewed focus on developing critical thinking skills and theoretical analysis alongside providing recruits with the necessary conceptual and procedural knowledge (Charman, 2017). This has been further supplemented by a continuing focus on professional standards and ethical decision-making as key to this agenda.

   This thesis pays close attention to both the promotion and the construction of the professional identity of Specials, given that they are not 'professionals' in the same sense as their regular colleagues, and that so much emphasis is now placed on professionalising the service provided by the regular workforce. The initial training package that Specials receive, and the ways in which the learning process continues thereafter, will reveal much about the efforts made by forces to assist volunteer officers to understand the fundamental expectations of the role in the same way that regulars do. Britton and Callender suggest that the professional identities of Specials are 'ambiguous, contested and confused' (2017: 164). The place that training occupies in acknowledging and addressing this (or contributing to it) will be important to explicate.

3) One consistent theme to emerge from the literature on this topic is that some Specials feel insufficiently prepared for active deployment once they have left the classroom (Whittle, 2012; Britton et al., 2016; Britton et al., 2018). In their survey of approximately 2000 Specials, Britton et al. return that over 40% of respondents did not agree that their initial training covered the things they needed to know, whilst over 45% did not agree that their initial

training helped them to feel confident when they began their role (2016). In their qualitative study, Britton et al. found that interview participants expressed a lack of 'self-confidence in the training they had received and stark concerns regarding the adequacy of initial practice training and support' (2018:264).

Indeed, Whittle (2014) has suggested that there is a significant 'gap' between the ending of the classroom phase and beginning of active deployment that forces do not manage well. This comes at a crucial point in Specials early careers, where the anxieties concerning the role they are about to undertake are sometimes exacerbated by a lack of support and direction (Britton et al., 2016; Britton et al., 2018). Not 'minding this gap' effectively can have significant implications for premature wastage (Whittle, 2014; Whittle, 2017).

It is contended that considered study on both the initial period of learning and the switch to becoming operational is thus required. Focussing on the academy phase will permit a detailed review of the content of the training packages delivered to Specials, whilst exploring both the levels of engagement that volunteers invest in their learning, and the pressures on training co-ordinators to design and deliver an appropriately-tailored crash course in policing practice. Focussing on the switch to operational practice will allow for a thorough explication of the consideration given to supporting volunteers as they adjust between very different learning environments, and the ways in which consistency in message and practice is carried across the two phases (or not). The training programme for Specials defers the majority of learning to the tutorship phase, but to what extent can forces be confident that regulars will be prepared, and able, to assist with this process? Such questions will be crucial to explore.

4) The above point links to a consideration of the relationship between Specials and regulars, and the importance of this for the volunteer experience. Unsurprisingly, given the similarities, and yet fundamental differences, between paid and unpaid police officers, this feature has received considerable attention in the recent and previous research on the field. From the Specials' perspectives, the contemporary research suggests a generally positive working relationship (Britton et al., 2016) but tension persists in some quarters. Previous research has returned how regular ranks shared a tendency to view Specials as 'overtime thieves' (Leon, 1991; Gaston and Alexander, 2001), whilst Bullock and Leeney suggest that

regular officers 'may resent the use of what they see as cheaper alternatives to the regular service', viewing calls to roll out the Special Constabulary with scepticism (2016:499).

From the volunteers' perspective, there persists a perpetual search for recognition and inclusion, which is unsurprising given how many of them have expressed a desire to transition to the regular ranks one day. The research shows how Specials '[frame] their desires for capability in their volunteer officer roles as being 'equivalent', or as near to equivalent as practicable, to those of (paid) Regulars' (Britton et al., 2018: 264). Resentment is often expressed at the levels of training provided, as well as the lack of practical skill-sets that Specials are assisted to develop (Bullock and Leeney, 2016), which frustrates them from becoming such 'equivalents'. This in turn is linked to Specials' perceptions of how they are seen by regulars as incompetent or amateurs.

There is nothing in the contemporary literature that seeks to appraise this relationship from the other side, something which this study will address in part. Leon (1991) previously found that nearly 80% of regulars believed that the training of Specials was inadequate. Therefore, given the sensitivity which needs to be shown to all warranted officers when seeking to integrate volunteers within the provision of frontline services, it is suggested that the levels of competency that Specials are able to demonstrate as deployable resources will not only significantly enhance their own feelings of self-worth and belonging, and increase their morale. It will also demonstrate to regulars that Specials can be of use and encourage their ongoing integration. This represents another pressing reason for seeking to better understand the processes and experiences of training volunteers to become police officers.

It is contended that these four points establish a compelling case for further investigation. Not only does Specials' training impact on confidence, morale, identity, and retention, as well as public confidence in the role, it also has the potential to significantly impact on the relationship between Specials and regulars, which in turn impacts on all of these aspects as well. In directing considered attention to this specific aspect of the field, this thesis will enhance the position of the literature on what is contended to be a most crucial feature of this special volunteering experience.

Orientating questions

Taking its lead from studies of regular officer training (notably Fielding, 1988; McNulty, 1994; Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017), this thesis will critically assess the training programme for Specials utilising the conceptual insights and findings from that body of literature. However, it will be especially attuned to what is different, or special, about the training of volunteer constables as a distinctive breed of police officer. For not only are the two programmes of training structurally very diverse, there are marked differences between those individuals who submit to each one in terms of status, external commitments, and organisational expectations.

This study will investigate this process of development with a twin set of emphases. Firstly, the project will attempt to address the *content* of what trainee Specials come to learn; thinking in terms of the contextual and cultural forms of knowledge they attain alongside the acquisition of more formal legal and policy-based awareness, the practical skill-sets which they procure, and the development of attitudinal frameworks and framing systems which come to determine the way they see the world. In conjunction with this, the project will also attempt to explicate the various *modes* through which this content is internalised, looking at how formal instruction, performance practice, and observing/absorbing from others combine and conflict during the process of attaining the sought-after standards of operational competency. By focussing not just on *what* they learn, but also *how* they learn it, the project hopes to be able to capture and track the developmental process as it takes hold, isolating the socio-cultural forces of production that mould trainees' reconfiguring awareness(es) of the policing world (and their place within it), and the corresponding impacts these have on how they see themselves, and their role, and how they act when wearing their uniform.

Thesis outline

Having set out the questions that will drive this study, a brief overview of the chapters to come now follows. Chapter two carries on from the scene-setting of this chapter to introduce the conceptual grounding that will be applied to the research site. It will set out a detailed theoretical framework for understanding the training programme for Specials as a process of socialisation, and introduce a longitudinal model for conceptualising the various stages through which volunteers progress.

Chapter three turns attention to the methodological strategy that was designed to explore the research site, which incorporated a combination of qualitative devices including 'traditional' ethnography, autoethnography, and semi-structured interviews. The chapter will also direct considered reflection to the practical and ethical challenges of conducting research on this field of study through such a strategy. Chapter four initiates the analysis and recognises the beginning of the socialisation process by considering what happens to volunteers during the application stage of seeking to join the Special Constabulary, including some retrospective insight from my own experience of this process. Chapter five considers the academy phase of the training programme, exploring the structure and content of the combined package of classroom learning, and capturing the experiences of trainee Specials as they begin their induction into the policing fold. During this phase I was essentially conducting a covert ethnography, having entered the training programme myself as a fully committed volunteer in the first instance. Chapter six follows the volunteer recruits as they attempt to negotiate Whittle's 'gap' and manage the shift between the staged environment of the academy and the disorientating world of frontline policing, focussing on a small number of shifts that comprise this initial period of adjustment. Here the research data is supplied from my (now overt) autoethnographic reflections from the field, and several in-depth interviews with trainee Specials from my academy cohort. Chapter seven continues to explore the lived experiences of training as a volunteer police officer and follows my socialisation journey as I progressed towards the end of the training programme. Finally, chapter 8 summarises the findings of the research project, and seeks to draw some conclusions on the uniqueness of training to become a volunteer police officer. Several recommendations are also proposed as an addition to the ongoing dialogue of the contemporary research base

Chapter 2

Conceptual Resources
Police Culture and Organisational Socialisation

This chapter introduces and critically discusses the conceptual resources which will inform this thesis. It will begin by examining the concept of *organisational socialisation*, taken here as a process through which Specials must pass to become competent in their role. Issuing from this discussion, the accompanying concept of *enculturation* will be explored. Here it will be argued that socialisation is mediated through occupational culture, and two perspectives on *cultural transmission* will be developed to explain how new members of an organisation encounter workplace culture and begin to assimilate with the rest of the workforce.

The introduction of culture necessitates a detailed engagement with the concept of *police culture*, which has become a central analytical resource within the police studies literature. Contemporary debates on the application of the concept will be considered, looking first at the potential of *normative* versus *appreciative* presentations, and then at the complex issue of how cultural formations link to the specifics of police practice. I will then seek to summarise the key characteristics of police culture as compiled by the literature, focusing on four kernel tenets which form the basis for a police officer's 'working personality'. This in turn requires an appreciative engagement with the basic pressures of the police role, which can be seen as the source of such a personality. The chapter will then appraise the same basic pressures of the police role as they are likely to be felt by Special Constables, and argue that the fundamentals of the policing role are experienced by them in a different manner. It follows that it should not be assumed that the core characteristics of the mainstream police culture are transferrable to Special Constables.

The chapter concludes with the introduction and discussion of a *socialisation model* as previously pioneered in studies of regular officer training. The application of this linear framework to the training programme of Specials will be positively appraised, and it will be argued that the analysis of the research data will be enhanced by adopting such an overarching structure.

1. Organisational Socialisation

Although policing practice is an immensely popular field for academic study, research on the initial training of regular police officers is relatively uncommon in the international policing literature. Those looking for research on the training of volunteer officers will find nothing at all. The few studies which have been undertaken with regular officers conceptualise the learning process within models of socialisation (Van Maanen 1973, 1975; Fielding, 1988; McNulty, 1994; Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017). That is, police recruits are treated as the objects of a socialisation process, the product of which is the occupationally competent officer. They are treated as being socialised *through* their early experiences of training and learning, both in the classroom and later, on the streets, to become members of the police organisation. Organisational socialisation becomes the focussing conceptual lens through which the training and learning process is initially approached.

Chan explains organisational socialisation as 'the process through which the novice learns the skills, knowledge and values necessary to become a competent member of an organisation or occupation' (2003:3). Elsewhere Chao describes it as 'a learning and adjustment process that enables an individual to assume an organizational role that fits both organizational and individual needs' (2012:1). The emphasis on 'assuming an organisational role' and 'becoming a competent member' suggest it is a formal, almost mechanical process. A need arises in the organisation for a new member to play a role in assisting with the overall functioning of the organisation, like a part in the machine, and a process is enacted to fulfil this requirement. However, this negates the important focus on individuality, which Chao rightly highlights. Unless the new member is able to fulfil a complex bundle of personal needs from the socialisation experience, they will not learn or adjust to become a competent member, and the organisational ends of the process are frustrated. These needs variously cover the desire to have a sense of belonging and purpose, and a requirement to have rewarding social exchanges (in both a material and inter-personal sense) (Chao, 2012; see also Van Maanen, 1975). To fully understand the socialisation process therefore, such a dual focus is needed, covering both the institution's and the individual's expectations, and the efforts each makes (or doesn't) to ensure these are aligned.

Organisational socialisation within policing can be seen as a multi-faceted process. As Chan continues, not only must recruits learn the 'laws, procedures, and techniques of law enforcement

and order maintenance', they must also acquire 'a range of organisational skills, attitudes and assumptions that are compatible with those other members of the occupation' (2003:3). It is not enough simply to rote learn the formal content of training courses, understanding policing powers and procedures in a socio-legal vacuum. The trainee must also internalise and reproduce complex features of an occupational identity.

And this is where the crux of the matter lies. From a formal organisational perspective (as set by the senior management team or the Home Office), the recruit should exit the learning programme with the requisite competence to function effectively as a member of the constabulary, assured in their legal authorities and confident in the public service mandate. But from an informal, rank-and-file perspective, the recruit by this time should elevate certain priorities, pursue certain aims, and promote certain values, potentially out of sync with the top-down vision, and aligned to a different conception of competence. In order to meet their own socialisation needs, achieving compatibility with their day-to-day colleagues, trainees will engage with the socialisation process in a particular direction, and whilst the organisation may seek to constrain and re-direct them, there will be other competing influences (Fielding, 1988).

Such a focus on socialisation allows for the exploration of both formal and informal influences on the learning careers of new recruits, when conceived of as those supposedly controlled and crafted by the organisation, and those that occur organically because of the cultural climate of the organisation's existing members. As will become clear, this thesis will pay great heed to the balance of formal and informal influences that characterise this programme of learning, the inherent tensions between them, and the way that these are negotiated by trainees as they learn the skills and requirements of their new role. This is a recurring theme in those studies of regular officer recruitment with similar orientating questions to mine (see especially Fielding, 1988; McNulty, 1994; Chan, 2003).

Thus, as a further conceptual resource, the socialisation process is often explored within the context of *enculturation,* also referred to as *cultural transmission* (Chan, 2003). This is the idea that successful socialisation involves the new member being inducted into the informal occupational culture, internalising and reproducing the accepted ways of thinking and standards of behaviour shared by existing members. These standards may have formal counterparts in the shape of

organisational mantras and service promises, or established codes of practice, and professional guidelines. Alternatively, they may be entirely subversive to the formal face of the organisation, promoting practices and values out of kilter with its objectives and expectations (Chan, 1996).

As Chan notes, it is 'through socialisation [that] new members acquire various types of cultural knowledge – the assumptions, values, cognitions, and behavioural norms of the organisation', and that in the policing studies literature, 'various dimensions of this cultural knowledge have been labelled loosely as police culture' (2003:2). Theories of cultural transmission within police organisations are generally transposed from the organisational studies literature, but their insights appear especially pertinent within this field. Following Chan (2003) and Schein (1985), I will discuss two perspectives on how occupational culture is reproduced and transmitted to new recruits; *sociodynamic theory*, and *learning theory.*

'Sociodynamic theory' focuses on the 'underlying interpersonal and emotional processes that explain how and why shared solutions, understandings, and world views develop' and are transmitted within a group (Chan, 2003:13). At the heart of these processes, Schein identifies a 'core conflict' that new members must negotiate between the wish to lose their personal identity and become fused with the group, and the wish to remain autonomous and free of the group (1985:149). On the one hand new members are reluctant to give up their agency and individuality, yet on the other they fear becoming isolated and estranged from the group and the protection it provides. Schein identifies three needs which are generated in members for ensuring their successful induction into their new social context; 1) a need for inclusion, which offers a role and identity in the group, 2) a need to master the environment, also permitting some degree of influence and control within the group, and 3) a need to feel accepted and secure within the group. When frustrated, these needs generate anxiety about one's membership, but when fulfilled they generate positive energy binding them to their new social setting (Chan, 2003). Whilst some will leave because their needs are not being met, those who persist 'gradually develop common conceptual categories and a language geared to mutual understanding and acceptance' (Schein, 1985:154). Within police organisations, Chan follows Fielding and Van Maanen in relaying how new members seek to fulfil these needs by relying heavily on experienced colleagues, drawing coping strategies and operating ideologies from them having 'confronted how great their ignorance of practice is'. The intricacies of applying static, formal, academy learning is contrasted with demonstrations of

practical, 'common-sense' procedures, the adoption of which helps them control their environment, as well as bringing positive, inclusive approval from experienced officers (Chan, 2003:15).

This orientation towards cultural transmission is especially useful when examining the experiences of volunteer officers. Assuming that it is the culture of regular officers to which they will be exposed, their socialisation needs will be interpreted and experienced in very different ways to those of new regular officers because of their social standing. An awareness of their position as volunteer members by both the Specials themselves and their regular counterparts will limit the role, and accompanying identity, that they can expect to achieve. Their expectations of inclusion will have to be moderated, as will their expectations of achieving influence within the regular officer peer group. However, their striving for some measure of acceptance will remain crucial to their engagement with the socialisation process, and those who find this need unfulfilled will likely disengage from the process altogether. Indeed, participants in the fieldwork confirmed this very scenario through their experiences, and these will be explored in due course.

Understanding enculturation as an interpersonal, needs-based process allows us to assess the learning experiences of Specials in relation to the social dynamics of their new environment, as well as their personal motivations; a combination of which drives them to adopt the operating understandings and outlook of the regular officer culture, or else find themselves estranged. Along with Chan, I argue that this understanding can be bolstered by additional observations from Schein's 'learning theory' approach, which feeds into the strategies new members adopt to avoid anxiety and uncertainty (1985).

According to this orientation, core elements of cultural knowledge are transmitted via a group-based learning process, either through the positive reinforcement of successful solutions to problems (problem solving), or through the successful avoidance of painful situations (anxiety avoidance) (Chan, 2003: 15). The results of either approach to a given situation will be circulated and shared amongst group members, and this stockpile of received wisdom provides a grounding for inexperienced new members unsure in their role. It is well documented in the literature that police cultures are disinclined towards innovation, and resistant to changes in approaching practical problems (Chan, 1997; Chan, 2003; Loftus, 2010). Thus, the prevalence of anxiety avoidance strategies within police culture is unsurprising. Schein explains that anxiety avoidance learning is

'often one-trial learning. Once something works, it will be repeated indefinitely, even if the source of the pain is no longer active' (1985:177). For instance, cultural wisdom ascribes handcuffing suspects following arrest as a matter of course, whatever their demeanour (unless they are especially frail). This is based on the assumption that the arrested person may resort to flight or fight following detention and handcuffs effectively negate these options (assuming they are applied in time). The source of pain here is the arrested person who wasn't handcuffed and escaped to leave the officer red-faced and under scrutiny, a 'war story' repeatedly recounted in training and which will be reinforced every so often by the overly trusting actions of an embarrassed officer at the station. To avoid such a situation, handcuffs will be routinely applied following arrest in almost every scenario, both by the experienced officers who see a risk not worth taking, and by the inexperienced officers who dare not make a mistake.

This type of anxiety avoidance learning is considered defensive and negative, encouraging distrust and cynicism (Chan, 2003). But its prevalence is not surprising considering the fast-paced and hectic environment in which officers must often operate. Perceptual stereotypes and categorisations can be seen as an anxiety avoidance strategy, permitting officers to quickly assume rationales for action based upon previous encounters (not necessarily their own), and apply standardised operational methods (Holdaway, 1983). Furthermore, operational 'rules of thumb', such as procedural shortcuts or stereotypes, 'reduce the levels of uncertainty and anxiety in police work and make unfamiliar situations seem more predictable' (Chan, 2003:16). For a new member overawed by their lack of understanding, and fighting to reconcile their book learning and stage-managed role-plays with the infinite variations of street situations, anxiety avoidance through the cultural appropriation of supposed practical policing techniques is unsurprising. Equally unsurprising is the willingness of experienced colleagues to transmit such frames of reference as a way of endorsing and sustaining the strategies they themselves rely on (Van Maanen, 1975).

Taken together, learning theory and sociodynamic theory provide a framework for appreciating not only the conditions under which cultural knowledge is developed and sustained, but also the basis for its transmission to new members of an organisation. In order for Specials to successfully engage with the socialisation process, they will need to orientate themselves to the dominant culture in a way that ensures a measure of needs satisfaction. It has been suggested that this measure will necessarily be different to that of newly recruited regular officers. However, it is expected that

Specials will also experience strong sentiments of anxiety upon their entry to the station, not least because of their minimal training, but also because of an awareness of their social standing within the regular culture. This, it is suggested, may make them even more inclined to seek assimilation by drawing from the existing cultural repertoire of regular officers. Having so far discussed police culture mainly in the abstract, in terms of its central import to the process of occupational socialisation, this thesis will now turn to a thorough explication of the concept itself, looking first at its origins and theoretical boundaries, and then at the content of that culture as currently surmised in the literature.

2. Police culture

The concept of culture, and specifically police culture, has become perhaps the central orientating analytical resource of policing studies throughout the last fifty years. Although often contested, and revised several times, its purported explanatory potential reaches from studies of socialisation to debates around professionalism, to the explication of almost any tactic or technique of social control, and to sociological concerns with gender, race, deviance, and corruption within the policing context (see Chan, 1996; Kappeller, Shulder, and Alpert, 1998; Loftus, 2010; Skolnick, 2008). This is because, as an analytical device, it purportedly offers researchers a vehicle through which to posit the operating conditions and concerns of the workforce, to attempt to explain why officers sometimes police the way they do, and to suggest ways in which they might do so differently (Chan, 1996).

The concept can be traced back to the early ethnographic studies of policing in the 60s and 70s. As researchers entered the field of policing as part of the expansion in qualitative field-based investigation, they began to routinely encounter informally codified sets of working practices and supporting attitudinal frameworks which characterised the ways in which the subjects of their studies undertook the task of policing. Observers began to distil the particular conditions of the police officer's relationship to the world, the combination of which appeared to generate a distinctive social outlook. This outlook crystalized into what Skolnick (1966) called a 'working

personality'; a distinguishing collection of norms and values, and associated working practices, from which officers would draw their reasons for action and their means of doing so. It is these norms, values and practices which have come to be collectively known in the literature as 'cop culture', 'police culture' or sometimes 'police sub-culture'.

This model begins with the relationship of officers to the world (police work) and observes the working personality thereafter. Following Skolnick (1966), police work is characterised by three central features; (1) danger and risk, and their anticipation, (2) the exercise of authority, especially the use of force against fellow citizens, and the inherent moral ambiguities and tensions therein (see also Muir, 1977), and (3) the pressure to be productive and efficient (however that is being measured at the time), and to demonstrate this. These features necessitate a working personality equipped with the requisite attitudinal and practical resources for survival in the working environment. These resources will be explored in due course. What is important to recognise here is that the police culture results from the conditions under which officers work, in that the norms and values that are shared and sustained are the ones that have proved successful in orientating officers in their world and assisting their ongoing success/survival.

However, talk of the working personality does not entail that all officers are cultural duplicates of each other. The position is not as rigid as this. Rather, the working personality can be viewed as a general 'operating ideology' to which officers are 'more or less' aligned, and which they can draw on to greater or lesser extents to assign value to action or justify practice, depending on the context (Fielding, 1988: 204). This point will be important when we come to consider reflective learning in the field.

As this study will also explore, such a personality or ideology is not forged from encounters in a working context alone. Even before officers have set out from the station, they learn to draw from the culture, and to explore its resourcefulness. Indeed, a large part of a recruit's initial experiences in the field of policing will involve them beginning to appropriate the cultural resources to successfully process particular situations in advance of encountering them. And even before officers learn how to deal with members of the public, they must learn how to deal with fellow members of their profession first (McNulty, 1994). For instance, as we will see (and as the literature demonstrates) a central theme of police academy settings focusses on team work, mutual

assistance, and cohesiveness (Conti, 2009). And whilst the formal direction may be in terms of supporting colleagues, there are clear cultural undercurrents of defensive solidarity, suspicion and intolerance of outsiders which are transmitted during this preparatory stage.

Contemporary debates

As mentioned above, police culture is a contested analytical resource, with multiple iterations in the literature variously deployed to explicate an array of policing issues. I will here discuss two key contemporary debates regarding the concept, before outlining the understanding that this thesis will proceed from. The first debate concerns the normative application of the concept, whilst the second references the difficulty of reconciling recognised cultural profiles with agency and actual practice in the field.

In his seminal article, Waddington recounts that police culture is 'often portrayed as a pervasive, malign, and a potent influence on the behaviour of officers' (1999:287). Similarly, Chan notes that police culture has been viewed as 'the breeding ground for unprofessional practices' and a repository for deviant behaviours (2003:3). The normative application of the concept, often used to denigrate officers by focusing on their insularity and resistance to change, has also made its way into public discourse, with media discussion often utilising the term because of its condemnatory potential, and coupling it with dialogue on the need for reform. This particular reading of the concept misses two important points, however. Firstly, we have already considered how culture results from the conditions of the working environment and the demands officers come under. Therefore, it is unfair to defame officers for their perceived cultural failings without taking into account the fundamental pressures under which they operate. Secondly, such a reading automatically dismisses the potential to highlight and explore the positive aspects of police culture, of which there are many. After all, police culture has developed in part to assist officers in making sense of an inherently problematic occupational position, offering coping mechanisms for what can be a stressful and traumatic undertaking, and support networks to combat the experience of social isolation which the role often requires (Chan, 2003).

Instead of automatically reaching for such a judgemental deployment of the concept, Waddington argues that police culture should first be considered from an *appreciative* perspective, and that subsequent conceptual formulations should give adequate attention to the structural contingencies within which it exists and operates (1999:294-295). Primacy must be given to the analytical pursuit of its originating conditions over the condemnatory aspect, even where there might be some critical value in highlighting negative features (Chan, 1996). It is true that many of the studies of police culture compiled in this century and the last have located aspects which are contemptible and rightly become the subject of scrutiny and debate. In the United Kingdom, Waddington cites both Holdaway (1983) and Young (1991) as clearly repudiating aspects of the cultures of their previous colleagues in their ethnographic studies of rank-and-file policing (1999), and more recently Loftus has raised concerns about racial profiling lurking within the cultural wariness of some officers towards 'outsiders' (2010). However, the analytical potential of the concept of police culture is severely restricted where normative assessment, even when made in good faith, becomes the focal concern. This study will therefore support an appreciative application of the concept, paying heed to the basic pressures of the workplace and seeking to recognise the sources of the cultural formations encountered.

The second debate that must be engaged with here is particularly complex (Bacon, 2014). It concerns the relationship between the culture as sustained by police officers, and the actions of officers undertaking their role. Early police ethnographies (see for example Banton, 1964; Skolnick, 1966; Westley, 1970; Cain, 1973; Manning, 1977; Punch, 1979) proffered what have been termed 'culturalist' accounts, suggesting that the attitudes of officers regarding how they conceptualised their role dictated their practice on the street and authorised informal working rules, which reflected and sustained their norms and values, and had little to do with the dictates of legal powers or departmental policy (Oakley, 2014). This position has since been challenged by the presentation of evidence suggesting that some cultural norms found to commonly occur within police culture do not reflect or effect the provision of service by officers in certain contexts. For instance, in her investigation into the policing of domestic violence, Hoyle (1996) found that officers' background attitudes towards victims and domestic incidents, which were generally dismissive and unappreciative, were at variance to the way in which officers actually sought to resolve the disputes that they attended, which often included sensitive and individually tailored solutions to complex

relational situations. Similarly, she references how the researchers Smith and Gray (1985) documented prevalent racist attitudes towards black and Asian people amongst officers, as revealed through their 'canteen banter', but that the same officers treated members of the ethnic minorities without prejudice or ill-feeling when they were encountered 'on the street'.

Waddington has also sought to emphasise not just the disparity between canteen chatter and actual police practice, but also the empirical difficulties of linking one to the other. He references developments in social psychology throughout the 20th century which increasingly sought to divorce talk from action, relaying the growing consensus from that field which has repeatedly reaffirmed in experiments that it is 'the circumstances in which subjects find themselves that dictate their behaviour, not the attitudes and beliefs that they bring with them to the experiment' (1999:289). Waddington furthers this assertion by referencing a cluster of studies that have analysed operational policing and explicated 'practices of much greater complexity and sophistication than could be extrapolated from canteen chatter', highlighting 'context-specific strategies' as the primary guides for action (such as Bittner 1967; Ker Muir, 1977; Norris, 1989; and Kempt et al., 1992).

Rather than being the repository of guides for action, Waddington (1999) suggests that police culture plays an instrumental backstage role in reaffirming officers' often unrealistic self-conceptions and sustaining an occupational resilience in the face of so much hostility and discord. Police culture is *equivalent* to canteen culture, and collectivises a hard core of ideological and attitudinal constructs which promote a positive self-identity, as well as providing officers with in-house resources to deal with what is an inherently problematic and conflictual occupational undertaking. The canteen is the arena where officers repair damages to their occupational identity by excessively articulating kernel referents which they consider central to their role, but in reality are not. Their culture encapsulates the ways in which officers' view their world and their work, and can be reduced to this.

Waddington does not seek to trivialise police culture through this formation, only to posit that it has a much more restricted causal effect on police agency than is often implied or suggested in the literature. Indeed, he resolutely affirms the coherence of the concept, and stipulates that there is a very clear sub-cultural make-up within rank-and-file policing, which finds a similarity of expression across jurisdictions and shows impressive endurance (1999:296). We might call this the 'content' of

police culture, or police cultural knowledge, considered as a collection of assumptions, persuasions and behavioural norms that are replicated across the frontlines, concerning how officers feel about themselves and the work they do. I will explore this content in depth in the following section, and the sources of these central characteristics, which it will be argued stem from the fundamentals and basic pressures of the police role. However, dismissing the causal role of cultural knowledge on action is analytically restrictive. Whatever the difficulties may be in articulating the relationship between them, to confine police culture to backstage performance impedes the understanding of distinctive informal working practices out on the street, which are commonly occurring and often clearly reflect key cultural referents.

In this thesis, I will follow Loftus's supposition that police culture often sets the tone for police action, whilst acknowledging that the precise causal mechanisms of their relationship may be impossible to pin down (2010). Notwithstanding Waddington and Hoyle's collated examples of officers saying one thing but doing another, I will point to multiple instances, both felt and observed, of key cultural characteristics which can clearly be evidenced in the action taken by officers, as well as in their canteen chatter about them. However, acknowledging that a 'culturalist' explanation is insufficient alone in some instances, I intend to pay special heed to the situational and circumstantial contingencies which operate on officers, whether these work to confine discretionary options or permit wide interpretation of how to achieve a resolution. I also intend to pay close attention to those situations where police action seems converse to police-cultural values, and explore potential explanations, alongside assessing how officers seek to handle this disparity and contradiction. This thesis will therefore take a wide focus when considering the ways in which officers act and their reasons for doing so, and more importantly, the ways in which Special Constables learn to act, and their reasons for doing so. It will be suggested that the multiple sources from which officers draw their reasons for action make the police role so hard to learn, especially for part-time participants. However, in line with the organisational studies literature, it will be posited that successful orientation to their role involves successfully engaging with the dominant workplace culture; that which is sustained and transmitted in the first instance by regular officers. It is to the content of this culture which we will now turn.

3. The content of police culture

One of the most interesting aspects of studies in police culture is the persistence of cultural identifiers across borders, especially amongst western countries (such as Great Britain, The United States, Australia, and Canada). Whilst no-one in the literature has claimed there to be a homogenous culture, and there is strong evidence for differentiation at local levels (even within the same force) and amongst different ranks (see Paoline, 2003), there are certain fundamental aspects which seemingly find their expression within the subcultures of every division, district, precinct, and patch encountered by police researchers (Waddington, 1999; Loftus, 2010).

To quote Loftus' summation of what Reiner (2000) has referred to as the 'core characteristics of policing', police officers, it is said:

> have an exaggerated sense of mission towards their role, and crave work that is crime orientated and promises excitement. They celebrate masculine exploits, show willingness to use force, and engage in informal working practices. Officers are continually suspicious, lead socially isolated lives and display defensive solidarity with colleagues. They are mainly conservative in politics and morality, and their culture is marked by cynicism and pessimism. The police world view includes a simplistic, decontextualized understanding of criminality, and officers are intolerant to those who challenge the status quo. (2010: 1)

Loftus refers to the characteristics collated above as the 'orthodox' view on police culture (2010). These are specific cultural norms which the collated literature has encountered and propounded on a regular basis for several decades. Following Waddington (1999) and Loftus (2010), I will focus on four key cultural elements, referencing the basic pressures of the working environment from which they issue. Doing so will enable a comparison to be drawn between Specials and their regular officer counterparts, where it will be suggested that although the fundamentals of the policing role are ostensibly the same for both groups, the voluntary nature of Specials means they will not necessarily be able to access or process certain aspects of cultural knowledge to their fullest extent. The four elements to be considered in turn will be i) an exaggerated sense of mission, ii) a masculine ethos, iii) an us/them mentality, and iv) a pervasive cynicism.

An exaggerated sense of mission

Perhaps the most readily observable aspect of a police officer's working personality is their deep-rooted self-conception as a 'crime fighter/social guardian'. The literature shows that this aspect of professional identity is routinely promoted above anything else that the police role might entail, even though it actually represents only a small percentage of what officers are likely to find themselves engaged in. 'Real' or 'proper' police work is heavily linked by officers to the proactive elements of disrupting and detecting criminal enterprise, relegating the more administrative and long-term problem-solving aspects of the role to lesser priorities, or even casting them as detractions from the authentic purpose of the police (Van Maanen, 1975; Holdaway, 1983; Loftus, 2010b).

This 'exaggerated sense of mission' represents a disconnect between how officers view their work, and the realities of it. Police work very seldom involves the proactive detection of crime, and even reactive detection is a relative rarity. Research highlights that officers actually spend very little time enforcing the law, and are as likely to be involved with the more mundane aspects of the role (Cain, 1973; Holdaway, 1983; Reiner, 2010). Yet officers routinely culturally subscribe to the belief that their work is essential in protecting the weak against the predatory (Reiner, 2000). References to the 'thin blue line' suggest that society is on the verge of collapse from the threat of crime, save for the stabilising efforts of police officers, despite the adversity in which they are asked to operate (Loftus, 2010). Behavioural norms linked to 'thief-taking' condition willing deployment to instances of burglaries-in-progress, but people in mental crisis prove a much less attractive prospect, even though the risk of harm is arguably much greater (Wood and Watson, 2017).

A masculine ethos

Closely allied to the assumptions officers hold of themselves as crime fighters and protectors of society, researchers routinely report that 'masculinity is a theme that infuses the police identity' (Loftus, 2010:7; Smith and Gray; 1985). Waddington locates the celebration of machismo as bravado in the main, part of officers' backstage performances when amongst themselves in an attempt to protect their occupational esteem in the absence of action and excitement, which is the more

common state of affairs (1999). Loftus continues that 'powerful undercurrents of masculinity encourage an aura of toughness and celebration of violence' (2010:7). Officers self-promote those aspects of their role that involve 'action', such as vehicle pursuits, crowd-control, or dealing with confrontational or aggressive subjects. Officers do not shy away from using force against non-compliant persons, and physicality is culturally revered as a positive attribute. This is not to say that officers are willing to accept or promote a level of violence that takes them outside their legal authorities and protections. In the UK at least, there is no recent evidence to support the notion that officers routinely abuse their powers in the physical treatment of members of the public, or even ascribe to the view that doing so is acceptable.[1] Yet Loftus observed in her fieldwork that officers on occasion displayed a 'desire for conflict' which 'sometimes set the rationale for practices'. As an example, she highlights the way in which officers would swiftly attend incidents, and often on mass, whenever there was a public order element or suggestion of violence (2010).

The concept of masculinity within this ethos is worth elaborating upon here, and its relation to gendered aspects of policing. As the policing profession has sought to embrace a modernising agenda in recent years and address its largely white heterosexual male hegemony through increasing diversity and representation, the literature reflects a sustained interest in exploring gender politics and identities within the policing landscape (see for example Holdaway and Parker, 1998; Westmarland, 2001; Westmarland, 2001b; Brown, 2007; Loftus, 2008; Kurtz and Upton, 2018). Much of this research has sought to explore female officers' experiences of their workplaces, both inside and outside of the station, in terms of how they relate to the role themselves and how others relate them to it. The impacts of increasing levels of female officers on traditional occupational perspectives and cultural values have been widely considered, as the endemic masculinity of the profession needs to be reinterpreted by shifting levels of gender representation, and understandings evolve about the most effective ways to undertake policing actions (see also Loftus, 2010).

However, whilst there is some divergence in the literature, there is also supporting evidence to suggest that female officers tend to accept and reinforce some of those aspects of policing culture

[1] Unless this is taken to cover the use of stop and search powers and the ensuing physical process of searching, of which research does suggest a correlation between some practice in this area and abuse of powers (Bowling and Phillips, 2007).

which are often attributed to its masculinity – crime-fighting, thrill-seeking, physical aptitude, and using force (Holdaway, 1998; Brown, 2007; Brough, Chataway, and Biggs, 2016). Whilst female officers may need to handle gender differently to their male colleagues in the construction a more contingent, fluid identity in order to assimilate themselves with rank-and-file policing and accomplish some policing tasks (Kurtz and Upton, 2018), they can equally access the operating crime control ideology of police culture, and often need to do so to fit in (Chan, 2003). The picture is more complex than can be extrapolated here, and some scholars have suggested that the increasing diversity agenda may dilute some of the traditional elements of cultural practice as new styles of policing emerged and are affirmed (Chan, 2003; Loftus, 2010). However, the enduring nature of masculinity as a key cultural construct as repeatedly encountered in studies of policing practice suggests that for now it remains deeply rooted. Thus, when discussing police culture's masculine ethos in the pages to come, this should be read as standing for aspects of the policing role that are inherently linked to traditional conceptions of 'maleness', but which are supported and interpreted in similar ways across all sexes within the organisation.

Us/them

Policing is a job which isolates its members on a number of fronts. Officers are exceptional in that they have legal authorities bestowed upon them which mark them out from regular citizens (Muir, 1977). Quite simply, they are allowed to do things which others cannot. They are also routinely required to do things which the majority of society are not, such as handling dead bodies, confronting antagonism and aggression, and dealing with people across a spectrum of distressed states. In another sense, policing - especially uniformed rank-and-file policing - necessitates a certain amount of personal sacrifice. Officers quickly find themselves socially isolated because of the irregularity of their shift patterns and working hours (Volti, 2012). They may also find it difficult to maintain social bonds with those whose lifestyle or political outlook conflicts with the fundamental tenets and tasks of their occupation.

It is very well documented in the literature that officers tend to feel a deep sense of solidarity and group cohesion (Crank, 2015; Chan, 2003; Fielding, 1988). They are quick to promote togetherness with colleagues and champion allegiance and support to fellow officers. This is a direct factor of the

social isolation instigated by their disruptive working routines, but also results from a cultural awareness of their uniqueness as social actors and the reception they receive from various sections of the public. Not only does this encourage strong bonds of team working and group effectiveness, but it also breeds a defensive loyalty and suspicion of outsiders (Loftus, 2009; Holdaway, 1983).

Cynicism

As discussed above, the realities of policing often fail to live up to the image officers sustain of what their work is about, or should be about. In her ethnography Loftus diagnosed that officers developed a 'profoundly cynical and pessimistic view of their social world' resulting from their disappointment at the realities of their working environment (2010:8; See also Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017). Where their work was monotonous and unrewarding, as opposed to action-orientated and proactive, a pervasive cynicism coloured their approaches to the tasks required of them. Officers came to expect 'nothing but the worst in human behaviour', and this powerful cynicism was only reinforced by regularly having to deal with 'the darker side of society' (2010:8). It is true that much of what officers confront is the opposite of affirming with regards to the human condition, routinely engaging with the effects of violence, vulnerability, degeneration, and delinquency. In light of this it can be hard for experienced practitioners to maintain an optimistic outlook, rendering the required level of compassion and diligence needed to deliver effective public service difficult, if not sometimes impossible, to muster.

Loftus also noted how cynicism regarding their working reality enabled officers to justify norms that are known in the literature as 'easing behaviours' (following Cain, 1973); instances of minor deviance, probably better described as work avoidance. Such examples include taking extended refreshment breaks, running personal errands whilst on duty, or claiming to be committed to avoid being dispatched to incidents. Such practices demonstrate how officers often seek to take control of their working time, self-justifying their activities in a manner which subjugates the constant demand for police resources. These activities are then sheltered from supervisory or management oversight by rank-and-file colleagues, sustaining and reproducing the norms of solidarity as discussed above (Loftus, 2010).

Basic pressures and the sources of cultural knowledge

As mentioned earlier, Skolnick diagnosed that the most dominant aspects of the police culture were sourced in the fundamentals of the role, in the basic pressures of the working environment (1966). The most prominent of these two pressures, danger and the exercise of authority, clearly permeate through the central cultural tenets I have focussed on.

Waddington gives primacy to the exercise of authority in his discussion of the sources of culture (1999). As a working group, police officers are very aware of their uniqueness in terms of designated powers, something which they hold in great esteem and which feeds their sense of mission; they have been selected by the state as guardians of society. But this authority brings moral dilemmas because it often requires a coercive application (Muir, 1977). On some occasions this will necessitate the use of force on fellow citizens, promoting traditionally masculine characteristics that ease the moral ambiguities around confrontation and the application of violent means. This in turn both pushes officers away from the rest of society, and encourages them to withdraw, as a result of the hostility they often face and the criticism they feel is unjustly levelled at them. They become separated and self-contained, creating strong bonds of solidarity, which insulate them and allow for informal justifications for actions. But their isolation is also experienced as alienating and frustrating, and they develop an enveloping cynicism to counter external observation and scrutiny. Conversely, pessimism also stems from the actual requirements of the working environment placed upon the modern-day officer, which prevent opportunities for them to use their legal authorities in the pursuit of criminal activity because of other tasks to which they are diverted.

Danger, as an occupational fundamental, affects officers' orientation to their role in similar and interlinked ways. Although very serious or fatal injuries in the line of duty will occur, they are in the main uncommon experiences. But the threat of their potential occurrence is ever present, and this instils a background wariness in everything officers do. Recent high profile incidents such as the murders of PC Keith Palmer in London in 2017, and PCs Nicola Hughes and Fiona Bone in Greater Manchester in 2012, and the manslaughter of PC David Phillips in Liverpool in 2015, serve as vivid reminders of the risk of death. The potential for lower levels of assault and injury is much higher, however. In 2017/2018, there were over 26,000 recorded assaults on police officers in England and Wales (ONS, 2018). Thus, the apprehension of confrontation and violence conditions officers'

responses towards members of the public at all times. This apprehension is encouraged by basic training techniques in officer safety, one of the first lessons commonly delivered to training cohorts prior to active deployment. But it is also sustained by the cultural value ascribed to action-orientated policing, the kind which officers perceive to best fit their self-conceived crime-fighting mission; that which is so sought after but rarely encountered. This is inherently coupled with a celebration of machismo and all the necessary physical and emotional attributes that are perceived to promote effectiveness in this arena. The potential dangers posed to officers by members of the public (and vice versa) is another wedge which drives them apart, encouraging officers to elevate the values of solidarity and supportiveness as a form of protection from the perils of the job. And this contributes to their pessimism about the public, who are conceived as a source of danger. Here, as above, we see how conflicting rationales within police culture are often interwoven within the working personality. Thus, pessimism and distrust towards members of the public are generated by the danger they potentially offer, and yet the fact that such danger exists is crucial to officers' self-conception as masculine crime fighters, and can represent a celebrated source of job satisfaction.

This study proceeds on the basis that the working environment of police officers' fosters, conditions, and sustains certain assumptions, values, cognitions, and behavioural norms within their occupational culture, but also that officers take an active role in socially constructing the bounds of their role. These aspects of cultural knowledge engender a distinct social outlook, and which 'subsequently underpins and informs conduct' (Loftus, 2010, following Manning, 1977).

Special Constables and cultural knowledge

What then of Special Constables, since the basic pressures of the police role are essentially the same? They are also state symbols of legal authority with the same powers as their regular officer counterparts, required to enact their authority and use force against fellow citizens where necessary. And as police officers, they potentially face the same threat level from members of the public when in uniform, both as targets of aggression but also when attending incidents. Although this is true in part, I suggest it is also misleading, and an exploration of these pressures in relation to Specials suggests that kernel elements of cultural knowledge cannot necessarily be ascribed to them in the same way.

Firstly, Special Constables in the main do not volunteer for shifts where their legal powers are likely to see them engaged in confrontation. Bar exceptional circumstance, they are not trained to engage in large scale public order situations (Whittle, 2017). They are prohibited from volunteering for full night shifts because of working time directives (although some flout this rule, as we will see – including the author), and weekend night time economy patrols are understandably not the most popular deployments for pro bono police work. Special Constables are also not trained as 'response drivers'; those authorised to activate emergency lights and sirens and forego standard road traffic restrictions in order to attend incidents as quickly as possible. Therefore, unless crewed with regular officers they rarely attend heated disputes as first responders, meaning that other officers have often dealt with the most confrontational aspects of an incident prior to their arrival. And when they are crewed with regular officers, Specials are less likely to take the lead in deploying their powers. The reasons for this will be explored in due course, and include deference to experience, competency levels, and the (un)willingness of regular officers to afford Specials primacy in resolving a situation. Statistics show that Specials rarely make arrests when on duty (Bullock and Leeney, 2016), although they may well be adept at enforcing legal provisions in other areas (such as issuing tickets for traffic violations). In short, it can be suggested that Specials are unlikely to resort to authority so frequently, or in such charged situations as regular officers do.

In a very similar way, Special Constables will generally not be exposed to danger and risk to the same degree as regular colleagues, and thus their appreciation of it will not be conditioned in the same way. As mentioned above, Specials rarely deal with confrontation as the lead officer, and therefore are less likely to be accustomed against it through managing it directly. They do not work night shifts, or routinely cover policing the night time economy, with which danger is heavily culturally associated. They rarely patrol on their own, but if so, will not be asked to attend incidents alone where there is any foresight of conflict. And because of their relatively infrequent attendance at the station they do not build up the same background awareness of their area as regular officers, privy to insights on any recent episodes of violence and disorder with which colleagues have been involved.

This study proceeds on the assumption that as Specials are trained during their tutorship phase by regular officers, that it is the working culture of regular officers that they are exposed to. Further, that their socialisation will draw from that culture, to the extent that it is extended by their regular

counterparts, and accessible to them because of their voluntary position. However, because of the way in which the fundamental pressures of the role are lessened for volunteer officers, it cannot be assumed that they are able to fully experience the extent of cultural knowledge sustained by regular officers, or that regular officers will be prepared to extend it to them. Exploring the four key cultural tenets encountered above will offer some suggestions as to why this might be the case.

Thinking first about regular officers' exaggerated sense of mission, it might be contended that Specials cannot claim the same professional dedication to public protection and crime-fighting because they are 'only' volunteers. Regular officers have an immediate bond with their counterparts, recognising in each other a vocational choice with weighty implications, but Special Constables cannot share in this. They give up a minimum of 16 hours a month, and although some do more than this, and a minority considerably more, they cannot claim this same sense of personal and professional identity, and neither are regular officers likely to extend it to them (Britton and Callender, 2017). As this thesis will reveal, they are often seen as part-time players, dipping in and out, and whilst many might aspire to join up as regular officers in the future, they are still allied to other causes until then.

In terms of celebrating masculinity that is intrinsically linked to the operating ideology, it could also be contended that Specials will be unable to fully grasp this core cultural theme because of the features of their role. Specials cannot drive police cars at break-neck speeds or pursue suspect vehicles. They are generally not specially trained to deal with the most volatile public order situations, or authorised to use specialist items of equipment, such as tasers, door rams or stinger devices. Their exposure to confrontation will be generally reduced as a result of their usual deployments, and therefore, their capacity to sustain a law 'enforcement' image will be limited by the infrequency with which they actually enforce their powers in a culturally meaningful way.

Although they will identify with the regular officer rank-and-file to some extent, it might also be contended that Specials are unlikely to feel the same disconnect from members of the public as their regular colleagues do. The isolationism experienced by regular officers plays a significant part in forging strong bonds of cohesiveness and teamwork amongst officers, especially within those on a particular shift or team (Sun, 2002). Again, this breeds deep-rooted camaraderie and supportiveness, but it also encourages wariness of outsiders and a defensive loyalty. Special

Constables cannot fully share this bonding mechanism with their regular counterparts. They can pick and choose which shifts to attend, as long as they are meeting their minimum hours quota. Their infrequent appearances at the station cause no great fissure with their social circles established prior to their oaths of allegiance. The extent to which Specials can become 'us' over 'them' cannot be assumed on the basis of a shared uniform.

And finally, it could be suggested that their cynicism and pessimism is likely to be substantially reduced when compared with regular officers. They know that they are not professional crime-fighters and thus cannot experience the same sense of frustration at being distracted from such an avowed mantra. They do not routinely protractedly investigate crimes or 'carry' workloads of investigations as do regular officers, and so they are not tied to the accompanying administrative commitments. Nor do they encounter the 'darker side of society' on such a frequent basis in the way that has been documented to cause regular officers such distrust and despondency (Loftus, 2010).

Taking stock

The above discussions have set out the conceptual grounding upon which this thesis will proceed. The socialisation process through which Specials attempt to achieve competence as police officers will be understood as grounded in the underlying process of cultural transmission – the flow of cultural knowledge from experienced members to new members. This cultural knowledge, which underscores a distinctive 'working personality' or 'operating ideology', stems from the fundamental pressures of the police role, and includes a widely recognised hard core of assumptions, values, and cognitions, which pave the way for associated behavioural norms and working rules. The process of cultural transmission is mechanised by the inter-personal relations of the workplace environment, where new recruits seek to satisfy a troika of fundamental needs (identity, mastery of the environment, and acceptance/security) that will underpin their successful integration with the organisation, adopting anxiety avoidance strategies that are dominant within the existing culture. However, because of the ways in which the basic pressures of the police role are mediated by the experience of volunteering, it is suggested that the bounds of regular officers' cultural knowledge may not be fully accessible to Specials. Certain assumptions, values and cognitions that support the

regular officer's outlook and practice may not be fully grasped by their part-time counterparts because of the disparities in their status, exposure, and commitments.

This point is not intended to undermine the cultural transmission model in this arena, only to highlight that the process is not straightforward. Because Special Constables *are* socialised, to some extent. They can attain measures of both formal and informal competence over the course of their training programmes. And the culture with which they must interact and engage is that which is sustained by their regular colleagues, and which has been the focus of so much academic study. It is fully anticipated that Specials will come to share many of the cognitive perspectives, and demonstrate many of the behavioural norms, propounded by regular officers. However, this thesis will be especially attuned to the Special Constables' understanding of the operating ideology, which is necessarily sustained by a different relationship to the working environment. And therefore, the basis on which shared assumptions and norms arise, and are supported, will be crucial to explicate.

4. A model for socialisation

As will be explained in the following chapter, this thesis will take a longitudinal approach to explicating the training programme undertaken by Special Constables, and the learning process therein. This will involve a mainly linear progression, following the process from the recruits' perspectives as they progress from their initial applications to the academy and tutorship phases. There will no doubt be some retrospective reflection, and themes will emerge with differing prominence at different stages. However, having a conceptual framework for cataloguing trainees' experiences against the timeline of their participation in the programme will allow this study to optimise the insights from the data-gathering strategy.

To this end, I intend to utilise a framework for organisational socialisation designed and deployed by police scholar and organisational theorist John Van Maanen. This 'socialisation continuum' specifies four analytically distinct yet interlinked stages through which new members pass as they come to 'acquire the motives, sentiments and behavioural patterns of the occupational culture'

pertaining to their police environment (1975: 220). Although there may be some slippage between the stages, they help to bracket the socialisation process, allowing for an assessment of the competing influences on trainees at each stage of their learning careers.

Van Maanen developed this framework whilst longitudinally investigating the job attitudes of police recruits in an American urban setting, looking specifically at how needs satisfaction, motivation and commitment levels fluctuated during their early exposures to the working environment (1973, 1975). Although this study has not set out to explore attitudinal change with the same quantitative emphasis that Van Maanen pursued, this framework still helpfully forecasts the trajectory of trainees' early learning careers and the significant events to focus on. I will now explore each of the four stages in turn, drawing on the insights of the literature for regular officers. I will then follow this with a considered summation of why I believe this framework can be constructively applied to the socialisation of Specials.

1) Entry

This first phase describes the recruit's application and vetting stage(s), which in police recruitment can be a long and protracted affair before selection is confirmed (Charman, 2017). Yet this very feature itself feeds into the process of conditioning the trainee for their new working identity. The drawn-out, 'arduous' selection procedures assure that those who join the occupation will have strong positive attitudes concerning their new job (Van Maanen, 1975: 221). They will likely feel a sense of achievement at having succeeded in a very competitive process, as well as relief at finally being given the opportunity to undertake a chosen career which often involves a large amount of personal expectation (Fielding, 1988; Conti, 2006).

Van Maanen refers to this phase as a 'most critical aspect of the socialisation process' (1975: 221). The organisational studies literature has long recognised the existence of anticipatory socialisation as a phenomenon experienced by new members prior to their entry into the organisation (Feldman, 1976). As Fielding and Fielding explain, 'potential incumbents prospectively imagine the demands of the job and rehearse their practice of it' (1986: 273). Police organisations fully understand this, and harness techniques of socialisation to promote such positive anticipation (such as inviting recruits on station visits, encouraging them to join friendship networks with fellow recruits and

existing members, requesting measurements for uniform, and disseminating pre-course instructions and material at regular intervals).

2) Introduction

Following the initial anticipatory buzz of application and selection, this phase covers the recruits' first experiences of the police environment, and in the majority of training programmes will involve an extended period of formal instruction at a training facility by suitably dedicated training staff. This is the first time that the trainees will get to wear their uniform, something which takes a short while to get used to, but soon becomes habitual. It will also be the first time they get to practice with the 'tools' of the trade, such as handcuffs, batons, and pepper spray, as well as learning about compliance techniques for gaining control of confrontational persons (Conti, 2011).

This phase is usually accompanied by several 'system shocks' to which the trainee must quickly adjust. Most training programmes still retain a militaristic feel, with weighty expectations placed upon the initiates in terms of behaviour and appearance, and harsh disciplinary codes enacted to enforce them (Van Maanen, 1975; Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010). The trainees must get used to being at the very bottom of the food chain, with very little social/cultural capital to deploy. This phase is also characterised by an intense learning experience, where a wealth of policy and procedure must be internalised as a key requisite of policing competence. This occurs in conjunction with exposure by proxy to the realities of police work through various departmental inputs and their trainers' stories of frontline working. And as they progress along the continuum within this protected environment, recruits will further extend their anticipation of deployment through a range of role plays and situational exercises. Here they will be expected to showcase trainee learning mostly determined in line with formal strictures, although informal cultural working practices may still bid for their attention (McNulty, 1994).

3) Encounter

This phase includes the recruit's first experiences of operational police work following his/her deployment to a station, capturing the reality shock of 'going live', no longer restricted to classroom

scenarios but exposed to their real-life equivalents and all the infinite variations therein. It will involve a progressive series of experiences where routine encounters will be faced for the first time, as the recruit begins to accrue and interpret experiences in common with cultural referents. These will invariably include making an arrest, encountering a dead body, and having to employ 'use of force' powers, etc. Even something as simple as talking to members of the public in uniform for the first time, as a police officer, can be a testing episode. Indeed, the very experience of wearing police uniform in public instils a new awareness and self-consciousness of one's symbolic identity, which can require some adjustment (Holdaway, 1983).

These routine encounters will gradually build up, both in terms of the frequency with which a given situation is experienced, but also the diversity of situations. Even a relatively novice police officer will be able to reel off a long list of commonly occurring calls for service with which they will have become increasingly familiar. And yet each occurrence of a particular type will present subtle variations which the trainee needs to negotiate, either by incorporating them into the plan for resolution, or ignoring them with a justifiable rationale. However, such rationales are no longer restricted to the formal codes and conditions expected by the abstract collection of powers and procedures existing in textbooks, statutes, and policy documents. They are now supplemented by a burgeoning awareness of the working rules utilised by the practised practitioners all around them.

The earliest days of this phase will usually involve the initiate being aligned to a 'tutor constable' or FTO (field training officer). Together with this officer, the trainee will explore their new environment, accompanying them on an immersive instructive tour of the local policing landscape, both geographically and 'sociologically'. For few trainees will come to the role with prior experiences that cover the spectrum of human action and emotion with which they will soon become acquainted. Nor will they possess a 'criminological' understanding of the territory over which they preside in the way their colleagues do (Holdaway, 1983). And once the trainee is deemed to have achieved a baseline of acceptable competence, they are uncoupled from their tutors and learn to practice alone, as well as in the company of a multitude of other officers.

As Van Maanen explains, it is during this decisive phase that the recruit

> learns what attitudes and behaviours are appropriate and expected of a patrolman within the social setting. This traditional feature of police work – patrolmen training patrolmen – insures

> continuity from class to class of police officer regardless of the [training school] instruction. In large measure, the flow of influence from one generation to another accounts for the remarkable stability of the pattern of police behaviour (1975: 222).

4) Metamorphosis

This phase represents the ending of the socialisation process, as the recruit settles into their role and the accompanying professional identity. Their attitudes and values align with those of their more experienced colleagues, and this is recognised by them in turn, conferring acceptance. The trainee no longer feels the same shock of the new, even when novel situations are encountered, and they begin to settle into the routines of shift work, accepting the isolationism it prescribes. Their working competence continues to develop on the ground, whilst they pass through formal assessments to achieve official recognition of such. Because of their similarity in attitude and behaviour, they find acceptance and camaraderie amongst the rank and file, and in turn feel a strong sense of collective identity (Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017).

A special model for socialisation?

As mentioned previously, the socialisation process of volunteer police officers has yet to be investigated in the literature. Whilst Van Maanen's model was developed to explore that process with regular officers, I argue it can usefully be applied to volunteers too. The four analytically distinct stages of the socialisation process can be transposed onto the training programme for Specials, who as we will see, progress along their own continuum, but with very similar structural elements, especially significant events, to that of regular officer trainees. However, utilising this framework will also allow me to highlight disparities in the content of these stages for Special Constables compared to regulars, and to suggest how this impacts on their differing experiences of socialisation within the police world.

Considering the structural similarities, in terms of 'entry', Special Constables in England and Wales must go through a thorough application and vetting stage before they are permitted to begin their training, lasting several months and comprising several selective elements, and which is sometimes complained about as too slow and drawn out (Britton et., 2016). And following their admittance

before this starts, there is a definite period of 'anticipatory socialisation' where the organisation seeks to build the esteem of new recruits, and the recruits themselves react with fervour and excitement (in some cases too much, as we will see). They then experience a similar 'introduction' to their regular peers, undertaking a significant period of training over the course of several months. This training is modelled on the package given to regular recruits, and is delivered with the same focus on discipline and standards. Following this, their 'entry' to the policing world is characterised in a similar manner again, with recruits allied to experienced officers who act as tutors, with the idea that they will then align their volunteering hours with a specific shift. They similarly experience the shock of 'going live', perhaps even more so than regular officers as their training has been much sparser and less rigorous in terms of the content covered and depth in which it is explored. And although efforts are usually made to smooth this transition, the attention paid to planning and monitoring this crucial period are minimal in comparison.

It is the final stage, the 'metamorphosis', that will be particularly interesting to explore in the context of Specials, especially compared to regular officers. Whilst it is fully expected that trainees coming to the end of the programme undergo a reorientation in their basic values and attitudes towards the role of policing, and will pick up working practices from colleagues that potentially undermine formal process, the operating ideology of rank-and-file culture will not necessarily be fully accessible to them. This is for all the reasons suggested earlier in this chapter concerning the ways in which they are distinct social actors in the policing world, identical in warranted powers but culturally separated from their full-time counterparts on several fronts. However, there are other structural reasons as to why metamorphosis in the context of Specials is likely to be significantly different experience. Further discussion here is delayed until chapter seven.

As will be explained in the following chapter, the subsequent chapters of this thesis will roll out in linear sequence, roughly corresponding to the four stages of socialisation as catalogued by Van Maanen. Utilising the conceptual elements considered above, especially an appreciative understanding of police culture considered here as cultural knowledge which often underpins and informs police conduct, the early learning careers of Special Constables will be documented and interpreted in the literature for the first time, and the training experiences of this hitherto sheltered collective of important legal actors will be brought to the fore.

Chapter 3

Methodology
The complexities of field access and data collection

It will be acknowledged from the outset of this chapter that the framework deployed here is one among many that could have been devised to shape the collection of data from this field of interest. The choices made reflect my particular position within that field (both in terms of affiliation and access), and the opportunities for data collection which arose because of it. The strategies adopted involved a multi-faceted, complex, and controversial approach to data collection and analysis, which evolved as the project progressed. In some areas the plan for data collection clearly failed, whereas in others 'success' was achieved in terms of data gathering, whilst the fulfilment of corresponding ethical obligations was much less clear cut. It is therefore contended that an extended and reflexive discussion of these issues is necessitated.

This chapter will proceed in four parts. The first section explores my relationship to the field of study, and how I came to access it. Here I will explain how I applied to become a Special before establishing an interest in the field as a site for academic study. This leads into a discussion of the implications that this had for my practical and theoretical positioning as an ethnographer. This aspect is developed in the second section to assess the methodological profile of analytic autoethnography, which advocates the reflexive interrogation of the researcher's own experiences as a key analytical device, and under which much of the project proceeded. In the third section I explain how the research was conducted, and reflect on the success of the methods utilised, examining how I employed a range of qualitative techniques, including different forms of participant observation as well as semi-structured interviews. The final section will then attend to the considerable ethical issues encountered during the field work, and beyond. This project involved the deployment of covert methods during the initial stages of field research at the academy, but later involved a switch to overt data gathering prior to my undertaking accompanied patrol. The ramifications and practicalities of managing these alternate and yet sliding positions will be addressed in detail.

Before I begin this explication however, I must address my current authorial position. Prior to conceiving this project as a doctoral student I made commitments to, and sought affiliation with, the very field that the study sets out to examine. And half way through the project, I strengthened my bonds with this field even further by taking up a full-time professional position within it, choosing to complete my doctoral studies in the background. Having initially only volunteered as a police officer, that is now my career. As this chapter progresses, I will pay due regard to the implications that both the volunteer and full-time profiles might have for the analytical content of this thesis.

1. Accessing the field

The origins of this project are somewhat unconventional, in that access to the field of interest had already been sought and granted (in one sense at least) before this programme of doctoral study had even been devised. I applied to the recruitment process for Specials in 2011 prior to developing an academic interest in the area. My initial motivations were several, and I will not seek to pass over them here, for they are surely central to my impressions of the field as someone also trying to write about it (Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

Like many who apply to become Specials, I had for a long time been interested in the possibility of a career as a police officer. During 2010 to 2011 I worked fulltime for a constabulary in a back-office role, supporting victims and witnesses of crime as they, and the cases they were intrinsically tied to, progressed (and were processed) through the courts. This experience was initially sought to bring me within the wider policing fold at a time of officer recruitment freezes, and only strengthened my affiliation with policing as a social practice. Knowing something of the lived reality of criminal justice, my interest in the role of the police officer was much deepened, and the back-office was no longer sufficient. I wanted to experience the social dynamics and relational demands of the role first hand, to be part of the performance, directly assisting those who had been harmed and instigating the machinery of justice against those who were responsible. However, confronted with the ongoing absence of regular officer recruitment, I switched to the field of socio-legal academia as a sideways step to strengthen my critical understanding of criminal justice matters, and also explore an

alternative career pathway. The office of Special Constable presented itself here as a means to test my suitability to the police officer role, and its suitability to me, and I was compelled to submit an application. I officially entered the stage of anticipatory socialisation (Van Maanen, 1975), for which my experiences had already established a gathering momentum. My valorisation of the police officer's role condensed into excited anticipation at the identity I would be taking on as my interest was officially affirmed and a uniform fitting was arranged.

Although this pull was strong, it merged with several other strands of intrigue and attraction. Thinking then from the perspective of someone also exploring the potential of a future career in academia,[2] and with a foundational interest in criminal justice matters, I considered the experience of 'Specialing' likely to prove extremely illuminating as to the political and situational dilemmas and dynamics that pervade contemporary policing practices. I imagined the additional authority I might claim as a commentator, having seen *and* felt something of the world I might make a living from critiquing. And on a personal level I saw the prospect for growth and development in many areas, harnessing the experience to improve my assertiveness and resilience, to learn and deploy first aid and conflict management skills, and to further expand my set of social understandings.

Thus, I initially came to this field with a deeply invested set of personal aspirations and commitments, the depth and breadth of which would likely spook those advocates of a social science which champions detachment and dispassion as crucial to analytical rigour (see for instance Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). For I chose to study Specials only after I had decided that I wanted to be one myself. The selection of this area as the research site of my thesis was quickly established as I began to learn more about the role I would be undertaking while also being exposed to the annals of policing cultures literature, and the various methodological approaches propounded by the authors therein (most notably Holdaway, 1983). The opportunity to produce something creative and genuinely individual seemed too good to miss, even if at the start it was the simply the thought of 'doing an ethnography on the Specials' that sustained me, and my original doctoral proposal on a very different field fell by the wayside. An analytic focus on the process of Specials training, on the crafting of a particular breed of legal actor, emerged as the focussing 'problem' for the project, but I ought to declare that the prospect of studying policing from the inside was also an early attraction

[2] I was already studying on the socio-legal studies MSc course at Bristol when I applied to join the Specials, with a funded Ph.D place confirmed to follow.

in itself (see Becker, 1958, for an advocation of letting the research problem 'emerge' as fieldwork progresses).

I am very aware of the extent to which I leave myself open to accusations of partisanship in what follows, considering my pre-identification with the role under study. I am also now a representative of the very field itself, and in my current role am required to act and speak on behalf of it. I will argue below that writing from within a group, as a 'native' or 'complete member' should not bar researchers from producing valuable scientific discourse, if by this we mean writing that illuminates aspects of our social environment, and argues for its ability to do so in a coherent, compelling way. Critics may attack the scope of my gaze within the field, claiming that it will be blind to certain contextual features more obvious to the impartial outsider without such personal and professional affiliations. This will affect the topics I select as important to discuss, and colour the way in which I seek to explicate the phenomena, unable to discern those pertinent aspects of the field most relevant to a critique of its socio-legal reality (Adler and Adler, 1987). Perhaps I will even seek to manipulate my presentation of the setting to make it appear more agreeable to external audiences, attempting to sway them through my own affiliate biases.

I cannot do much more here than ask readers of such sceptical bents to bear with me. Rather than promoting the analytical value of marginality as others have done (see Lofland, 1971), I argue that looking from inside to out adds greater depth to my data and actually makes me *more* attuned to some of the contextual features of the research setting (Adler and Adler, 1987). My identification with the wider institution I submitted to volunteer for, and now work for, does not preclude me having views on policing and criminal justice sometimes out of step with those insular attitudes often attributed to frontline police cultures as discussed in the previous chapter. Believing in the importance of the police's role within society, a role I committed to assisting and propagating in principle, did not necessarily align me to the vision or practice of this as demonstrated by the force in question and its officers, and on occasions as a Special I found myself feeling out of place and divided. Whilst I can acknowledge the creeping acceptance of certain framing devices within my outlook since I began this journey, and will be honest and open about these throughout the thesis, I still feel a strong sense of liberal, freedom-focussed identity, and will not be shy in identifying and discussing aspects of the policing system which rightly deserve critique. I advance the need to undertake critical inquiries on the police from a more collaborative, situated perspective than is the

common standpoint (Fyfe and Wilson, 2012). I intend to do this partly through bringing the human experience of policing to the fore, whilst also focussing a critical lens to my surroundings. By making everything explicit, I leave it up to readers to judge the extent of my success.

I cannot escape the interpretative interference that my current position will certainly have (to some degree) on my reading of data collected as a Special. Since undergoing the training as a Special, I have been re-trained and re-socialised as a regular, repeating and reinforcing many of the lessons first learnt as a volunteer, but also reconfiguring others, and overriding some altogether. Working from the data, I can no longer write as a Special, but as someone trying to remember what it was like to see the world that way. At times, this will no doubt be complex and difficult, but at other times it will also be readily accessible; when the themes and content emerging from the fieldnotes provoke on the one hand familiar feelings that are easily identifiable, but on the other a disparate tone that I no longer align with, attributable to my former Specialing self.

There is nothing I can do to mediate this development, beyond ensuring openness and honesty about how I have interpreted the data, reflecting on it from two perspectives, with the most important one growing ever more distance. However, as this project has a strong autoethnographic bent, I also intend to provide accompanying insight from my current role as a regular officer where relevant, being explicit about this as and when I do so. I will argue that I gained unique insights into the process of becoming a Special by actually participating in that process (in part on a covert basis). I gained a sense of what it means to be a Special, which can only be understood fully by reference to their relationship with regular officers. But my sense of that relationship was from one side only. I could observe how officers interacted with Specials, but I could not 'feel' how it was experienced for regular officers, or hear what regular officers said amongst themselves about Specials when the latter were not present (although as I argue in Chapter 7, the openness with which some officers denigrated Specials in my presence revealed that they came to see me as distinct from the wider body). What I am now able to do is reconsider this relationship from a regular officer standpoint. This gives me two unique and compelling vantage points to understand the world of the Special.

The ethnographic endeavour

The design of this project emerged through a dialectic process in which research interests came out of, and then fed back into, the opportunities for data collection already presented by my prior application to enter the field as a trainee Special. The obvious opportunities to compose an ethnographic exploration of the field needed to be harnessed and justified within the terms of the chosen subject area and the research questions duly devised.

Ethnography is a deeply empirical, personal practice. As an orientating methodological platform, it finds researchers placed in the midst of their field of interest with the intention that they become somehow 'conversant with the culture' that they have chosen to investigate (Winlow, as quoted in Westmarland, 2011: 137). In doing so, they are (hopefully) able to recognise and describe the social processes through which participants themselves assemble the stable features of their social world. As Wakeman describes, ethnography promotes '"being with" and "being present" in moments of meaning making as they occur' among research subjects (2014: 710). Best considered as a collection of techniques, the combination of which is contingent within each study, the ethnographic endeavour allows researchers to utilise 'personal observation, interaction, and experience' (Adler, 1985: 11) as a (set of) means to open up their research questions, usually stemming from the general form 'What is going on here?' (Suter, 2012: 346). Within this project and this field, that question is operationalised in the first instance as 'how do trainee Specials learn to undertake their role?'

As a medium of communication as much as analysis, ethnographies inevitably involve an element of 'story-telling', whereby the researcher aims to recreate the social world under study as part of the critique, or at least to present some of its most salient features in a way which is accessible to the reader. The method therefore relies on the ethnographer's ability to construct thickly descriptive (Geertz, 1973), rich, and thoroughgoing accounts of the subjects within the field, capturing the 'human feel and texture of the situations' at the heart of the analysis (Ferrell, 2012: 224).

Native experience

The 'placing' of the researcher in the chosen world of study is a key component of the ethnographic endeavour, with their relationship to the members of the field, and their activities, having a fundamental influence on the forms of research collected, considered both in terms of accessible sources of information, and the strength of that information (understood here as its propensity to support socially insightful commentary on the world in question). Participant observation is the terminology usually employed to describe this relationship, and is best understood as representing something of a continuum (Gold, 1958); from researchers who crouch and watch from the shadowy edges of the field, to those who play a fully participating role in the performance of those activities which band its members together. Each place on the spectrum has its purported benefits and detractions, with the particular 'presence' that the researcher adopts having attendant implications for the kinds and quality of data gathered, and the impact of the study on the researched.

This project utilises a position from the latter end of the spectrum (perhaps *the* end of the spectrum), described by Adler and Adler as a 'complete membership' role:

> Rather than experiencing mere participatory involvement, complete-member-researchers (CMRs) immerse themselves fully in the group as "natives". They and their subjects relate to each other as status equals, dedicated to sharing in a common set of experiences, feelings and goals. As a result, CMRs come closest of all researchers to approximating the emotional stance of the people they study (1987: 67).

As a fully participating, committed trainee myself, I had little option but to submit to the bounds of this profile, conducting my research from such a position. However, it is contended here that the CMR role is entirely appropriate for this project, considering the aims advanced and the wider field of study within which it is situated.

To begin with, being situated in the field as a trainee, subject to the same conditions and demands as other participants in the programme, allowed me to document the experiential process of learning first hand. Using my own observations and reflections from the ground, I was able to compile an insider account of the process of conversion that trainees undergo. As Forrest (1991)

similarly sought to do in a very different setting[3], my epistemological commitment as a researcher was to 'document the process of becoming a member', utilising my own personal experience of this transformation to enhance my feel for the phenomenon. I cannot and will not claim to have seen the world of the training programme as all others do. I am not especially representative of trainee Specials in terms of education, privilege, prior experiences, and political orientation. But I can offer a situated reflexive perspective, fleshed out with personal observations and anecdotes, which tells something of the lived reality of the programme. This account, useful in its own right, I argue, can test, and be tested against, those of other participants who underwent the same experiences (Anderson, 2006).

Furthermore, the grounds of my membership upon which these experiences are founded promoted a familiarity with this world and its participants on both a sociological and personal level. As a 'Special' kind of police officer, my awareness of the policing landscape – its formal and informal norms – was heightened through the demands of the role. When in uniform I was not simply trying to observe and document the structures and processes that permeate the world of frontline policing, paying attention to the working rules and cultural values that ground professional etiquette and practice. I actively operated within these, learning what was required of me *as a member*. This practitioner knowledge or 'understanding in use' (Adler and Adler, 1987: 82) allows me to appreciate the practice and explanations of others more coherently, since not only can I speak the 'native language', I also know something of the pressures and prerogatives endemic to the field, and the ways in which these work on participants (Wakeman, 2014). In a similar vein, Ferrell contends that only CMRs can achieve the empathetic connection with participants to fully explore the social and cultural depths of the research setting, moving the researcher's own experiences and emotions inside the subject matter itself (2012).

Yet caution is needed here as well. For whilst the above is true in relation to the experience of being a Special, the bounds of that experience did not mean that I was able to immediately and correctly interpret the actions of other actors, notably my regular colleagues. Socialisation is a longitudinal process, which requires investment and experiential learning, and cultural understanding takes time. Reading back through the fieldnotes as a regular officer I can interpret and identify strategies

[3] Forrest enrolled in training classes with spiritualist churches in order to enhance her understanding of the cultural dynamics of religious conversion.

for action observed in the practice of my regular colleagues that I could not as a Special, and in fact misinterpreted them in the first instance, sometimes with undue criticism. The following example highlights this.

On one occasion (to subsequently be further discussed) a woman was causing a disturbance in the police station front office, and the staff there requested assistance. I attended with another officer and found the woman to be very disruptive and highly intoxicated. It transpired that she wanted to see her probation worker (also based at the police station), although she did not have an appointment. Whilst I was calming her down, the other officer ran a 'person-check' on the female. I was becoming more aware at this stage of my training (23 shifts in) of the routine running of person-checks on people. Sometimes I experienced this as unnecessarily intrusive or just unnecessary. Several officers had explained that it was considered a serious error of judgement to have someone in your company and only later find out after they had gone that they were 'wanted' for arrest. Therefore, person checks were made as a general matter of course, a working rule to avoid anxiety and critique, but I remained unconvinced and saw it as invasive.

On this occasion I questioned the officer's decision to run the check as odd and superfluous. I surmised that she was very unlikely to have voluntarily walked into a police station if there was a matter hanging over her head for which she could be arrested. I know now, from grounded experience, that for many 'regular customers' of the police and the courts, having an outstanding matter waiting to be dealt with is a depressingly common occurrence. The conveyor belt of criminal justice means that large numbers of individuals remain in a perpetual cycle of offending and punishment (Sanders et al., 2010), often unawares of whether they are sought by the police or the courts. I will happily stake a box of Crispy Crème's that I can walk out of my police station and find someone wanted for a court warrant, or arrestable for an offence, within half an hour. This officer's actions were sensible and sound.

Such instances of misinterpretation were rare from what I now make of my fieldnotes, but that does not mean that my response to other incidents in the field did not confuse the way I presented my observations in my data, obscuring the actual working rationales. As one officer routinely remarked to me 'You'll see this when you join up mate', and in these instances he was right. However, I still contend that my membership status gave me significant access to cultural understanding in the

field, especially towards the end of my data collection (and socialisation journey), and especially in relation to the experience of being a Special, which is the focus of this thesis. Indeed, the point I make above is an important piece of analysis to be developed in due course.

In conjunction with the heightened sense of cultural awareness that can only result from a 'prolonged immersion' in the field (Hayano, 1982: 155), performing the role myself engendered a sense of kinship and a positive rapport with other field members (especially fellow trainees). Having trained alongside me, they knew that I had a similar experiential feel for the setting, and also that our motivations for being there coincided on some level. This encouraged them to offer frank and candid assessments on their experiences, unhindered by the need to explain things to a non-initiate and keen to debrief with someone who 'gets it' (Wacquant, 1995). As a Special, I had my own custodian hat and set of handcuffs, as well as war stories as illustrative of the Specialing landscape as theirs. All of these factors thus open up the research setting.

This is not the first study to be undertaken of policing from the inside, but it is one of very few in the literature. The small number that have been (most notably Holdaway, 1983; Young, 1991) are CMR studies in one sense, but not in others. Although both authors wrote as police officers attempting to capture and re-present the prevailing norms and practices that sustained the working culture of their peers in uniform, they did so having already switched allegiance (at least internally) to the discipline of sociology, disillusioned and distanced from 'the job', and knowing that they would soon leave the policing field for that of academia. Although fully active participants in the activities of policing, their goals and feelings had sufficiently altered by the time they came to conduct their research to beg the question as to whether they were still 'members' in the sense registered above. Some have even argued that this dissonance affects their ability to access and transcribe the cultural values of their working groups (Reiner and Newburn, 2008). In contrast, alongside my fellow trainees, I was committed to the goal of developing competence as a Special, and my experiences of the field reflect this. Although Holdaway and Young reflect on their own experiences, theirs is a subtle voice, shadowed by an integrative attempt to speak of and 'for' their colleagues. My study, whilst not claiming to offer a voice for all police officers, whether Special or not, often places my experiences at the fore, and in doing so offers an insight into the lived reality of contemporary policing and its challenges. This will be a novel addition to the literature.

It should be noted that undertaking a complete membership role has pressing implications for the kind of ethnographic product which will result from the fieldwork. The personal experience of conversion which dominates the researcher's exposure to the field necessitates an inward-looking gaze, and lends the data-collecting process a doubly subjective bent. Not only is the researcher attempting to interpret and render the social world of others as they (the researcher) see it, they are predominately required to document their entry into that community in a deeply reflexive manner having declared allegiance with it. This in turn shapes the epistemological basis of the research enterprise.

2. Ethnographic epistemologies

Considering the peculiar path of access which preceded the fieldwork, it is contended that the methodological strategy chosen here for the subsequent analysis ought to reflect the personal orientation of the researcher *to* this field, and place *within* the field, whilst at the same time permitting rigorous social science research *on* the field. Not only did I choose to enter this arena before conceiving of this specific doctoral project, but I subsequently became thoroughly embedded in the field as a fully participating practitioner; what has been referenced as above a complete-member-researcher (CMR), an unapologetic native. Any subsequent analysis that issues from the collated field data needs to reflect my motivations for being there, as well as the deeply situated perspective from which I appraise the social world in question, and the implications this has for research 'findings' I will eventually posit.

Having surveyed the literature on ethnographic method, exploring the interchange between empirical (practical) and theoretical considerations, especially in relation to sources of data and epistemological claims of reliability/validity regarding the eventual product of the study, I consider the positioning of analytic autoethnography to give me the most suitable base from which to explore the concerns of the study, whilst at the same time acknowledging the particular subjective gaze from which those concerns are weighed, and knowledge claims subsequently offered.

Autoethnography as a research agenda has gathered considerable momentum in recent years, but the concept best represents a collection of authorial genres rather than a single style; many of which conflict and contrast with basic methodological assumptions (Wakeman, 2014). The only unifying thread is that the experiences of the researcher – the auto – are given due reflective regard and situated at the heart of the research output. A prominent stream of autoethnographic research is that propounded by its primary protagonists Ellis and Bochner (Ellis, 1997; Ellis and Bochner, 2000) which helpfully utilises the epithet 'evocative' or 'emotional autoethnography' to characterise an avowedly anti-realist theoretical standpoint. Here, the chief concern is to 'bypass the representational problem by invoking an epistemology of emotion, moving the reader to feel the feelings of the other' (Denzin, 1997: 228). Compelling description of subjective emotional experience aims to create emotional resonance between the reader and the writing (Anderson, 2006: 377), creating narrative texts that refuse to abstract and explain (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 744). As Wakeman comments, emotional resonance is promoted 'over and above any sort of analytic unity. There is a complete rejection of any pretence towards objectivity' (2014: 708).

Proponents of traditionalist qualitative research dismiss the analytic rigour and value of evocative autoethnographic accounts, rejecting them as overly introspective, self-indulgent, narcissistic, and individualised (see Mendez, 2013 for an overview of criticisms, and Le Roux, 2017 for problems around assessing 'rigour'). Critics take umbrage at the post-modernist rejection of 'social science' inherent in evocative texts, questioning the value of research that explicitly rejects generalising or transferring knowledge gains, even where the rejection of positivism and objectivity is shared (Ferrell, 2012).

Alternatively, there are ethnographers who find themselves writing from a CMR perspective, persuaded by calls to foreground their own experiences in the data, but who remain unconvinced by the discursive, narrative approach of evocative authors. To this end, Anderson has proposed a model for 'analytic autoethnography', allowing CMRs to be visible in their published texts, and yet still 'committed to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena' (2006: 373). Wakeman adds that overly self-absorbed accounts are avoided by a novel analytic strategy which seeks to 'establish connections between the researcher, the researched, and the wider structural settings both are situated within' by conducting '*social* investigation…*through* the self' (2014: 708). That is not to say that 'moments of shared emotional resonance' should not be part of

the project; rather, that this resonance is explored and explicated in the context that it occurred between researcher and researched first, before it is embodied within a narrative that reaches out the audience (Ferrell, 2012: 224).

In what follows I will assess the five kernel characteristics of analytic ethnography as championed by Anderson, and relate them to the context of my study.

1) ***CMR status***

This ethnographic profile has been encountered above, especially the fit it provides for this thesis, and need not be revisited in detail here. What Anderson's account adds is an analytical wariness against 'the simplistic notion of understanding a phenomenon by becoming the phenomenon'. Indeed, he continues, the 'documentation and analysis of variation is a common focus of ethnographic description……Group members seldom exhibit a uniform set of beliefs, values, and levels of commitment. As a result, even complete membership confers only a partial vantage point for observation of the social world under study' (2006: 381). The CMR's dual focus on researcher and participant will always serve to distinguish them in one sense from other members.

For Anderson, rather than being someone who autonomously deciphers and translates the cultural concepts and constructs of their fellow members, the CMR is better considered as someone who is a 'legitimate participant in the group's conversations (and activities) through which multiple (and potentially contradictory)…constructs are developed, contested and sustained' (2006: 382). The autoethnographer is admittedly a more self-conscious participant in these conversations, but they maintain an authentic place in group-based dialogue, and their understanding(s) of those constructs is still valid and analytically valuable.

2) ***Analytic reflexivity***

This second point focusses on the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and the direction to pay proper attention to it. Following Davies (1999), Anderson presents the concept of reflexivity as the researcher's awareness of their 'necessary connection' to the

research setting. Not only does this require reflection on the effects of the researcher's presence in the field, but it promotes a deeper awareness of the 'reciprocal influence between ethnographers and their settings and informants' (2006: 382).

The methodological innovation of autoethnography comes from its willingness not only to explore self-experience, but to incorporate it into the processes of representing the social worlds under study. As CMRs, autoethnographers are exposed to cultural value sets very directly, in that they must personally engage and process these as a member, not just an observer. They also play an active part themselves in reaffirming and developing the pervasive value sets as a *participant* in the cocreation of cultural meanings (2006: 383). Self-consciousness of this aspect of their presence, coupled with a willingness to explore the experiences of self and others in reference to each other, gives autoethnographers an interpretive angle that the more traditionally detached observational positions are unable to access (Gubrium and Holstein, 2008).

3) Visible and active researcher in the text

This point is intrinsically linked to the one above. A correlation of the reflexivity encouraged by realist autoethnographic tales is the foregrounding of personal insights and experiences in the resultant text. Whereas the traditional ethnographer is a 'largely invisible…and yet omniscient presence', analytic autoethnographers are 'highly visible social actors' in the final product (2006: 383-384). Their own thoughts, feelings, reactions, and experiences are vital data sources, but must be clearly labelled as such in the subsequent analysis. As Anderson continues, such 'enhanced textual visibility' demonstrates personal engagement with the field of interest, but also displays the requisite analytical reflexivity and honesty about participation that make autoethnographic studies worthwhile. Personal anecdotes and subjective experiences can also provide interesting and novel vehicles for framing and developing analytical insight (2006: 384). In the coming pages I will regularly utilise the rich discourse of my fieldnotes to bring alive the realities of the field.

Caution is needed, however, to avoid the charges levelled at evocative autoethnography that the overuse of subjective experience leads to 'author saturated texts' (Geertz, 1988) and 'self-

absorption' (Anderson, 2006: 385). Self-narrative, or the exposure of self, should not be used without some analytical commitment, beyond merely provoking sentiment or conveying emotionality. Instead, authorial visibility should be utilised to 'develop and refine generalised theoretical understandings of social processes' (2006: 385). One of the ways in which this can be achieved is by combining and comparing subjective experience with that of other actors in the field.

4) Dialogue with informants beyond the self

Although analytic autoethnography permits a shift in the data gathering focus from outward to inward, it cannot forget the former entirely. Data from other sources is necessary to avoid studies slipping into solipsism and self-absorption. Whilst analytic autoethnography is 'grounded in self-experience' Anderson advises, it must 'reach beyond it as well' (2006: 386). The ethnographic imperative to seek to understand and make sense of complex social worlds cannot be achieved through introspection and subjective experience alone (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamony, 2003). But neither should researchers forget that they are very much part of those worlds, instead attempting to seek connections between the self and others. Ferrell reinforces this point with the following directive:

> Good autoethnography examines the self as situated in social and cultural context; in this sense autoethnography requires ethnography as well. Because of this, autoethnography usefully begins with a critical awareness of the researcher's social situation and only then flows toward the researcher as a self-aware subject. Remember: an ethnographer first, an autoethnographer second. (2012: 224)

As will be discussed below, interview participants from my training cohort were engaged to provide an additional revenue of data for those stages of the socialisation process where I had little interaction with other Specials. This occurred during the tutorship phase where I was allocated to a team of regular officers. However, throughout the study I encountered many other 'research informants' within the field, from regular colleagues of several ranks, to victims of crime, suspects and offenders, and to members of the public in many other personas, all of which caused me to reflect on the relational dynamics between us, and which helped me to

'chronicle the scene and setting' (Ferrell, 2012: 223). Therefore, even during the phase of the research where data on Specials came mostly from my own experiences, I was able to capture and consider a multitude of interactive insights on the process of becoming a Special from a range of alternate perspectives.

5) Commitment to an analytic agenda

This final point hammers home the distinction between analytic and evocative autoethnography. Whereas the latter explicitly rejects attempts to generalise from subjective experience, analytic autoethnography affirms the traditional social science mantra of seeking to transcend empirical data, and 'gain insight into some broader set of social phenomena than those provided by the data themselves'. Like all analytic social researchers, analytic autoethnographers direct their practice toward theoretical development, refinement, and extension' (Anderson, 2006: 387). Anderson concludes that the 'definitive feature' of this type of research 'is this value-added quality of not only truthfully rendering the social world under investigation but also transcending that world through broader generalisation' (2006: 388).

Returning to Ferrell, who explicitly acknowledges and encourages the utility of including emotionally engaging experiences in autoethnographic texts (as does Wakeman, 2014), the decision to include anecdote should not just be taken to craft a bond between author and audience. Anecdotes should be included in a way which facilitates the exploration of broader themes, and even better as the basis for identifying emergent analytic categories that feed into the generation of grounded theory (2014: 225-226). Whilst acknowledging restrictions to the data gathering strategy, which limit the capacity for theoretical generalisation somewhat (most notably that I was a lone researcher operating within one police service for a relatively limited period of time), this study intends to further theoretical understanding in the field of policing, and to make connections with other areas of sociological research, including volunteering, organisational culture, and practical ethics.

These five elements set out a methodological profile that is at once self-reflexive, and yet at the same time analytically self-conscious and thorough. Whilst the call of evocative ethnography has

itself been strong (see Short, Turner, and Grant's 2013 collection *Contemporary British Autoethnography*, which proceeds from an avowedly evocative standpoint), it is also possible to recognise a swell of analytic studies that demonstrate Anderson's tenets to a greater or lesser degree (see Anderson and Austin, 2012), and this thesis seeks to add to that body of work.

There is a final point regarding the suitability of autoethnography, utilising the work of Tedlock (1991), and her contributions on the 'observation of participation'. Writing prior to Anderson's codification, Tedlock argued for a methodological shift in representation, advocating that 'ethnographers both experience and observe their own and others' co-participation within the ethnographic encounter' and that the self and other be 'presented together within a single narrative ethnography, focussed on the character and process of the ethnographic dialogue' (1991: 69). Her focus here is on theory development in the social sciences, challenging researchers within their fields of interest to explore the grand themes of identity construction and enculturation. Such projects are to be conceived within schemas of self-revelation, co-produced with participants/members, and delivered through field experiences to which the researcher is inherently bound, as they becomes inducted into the culture of the other (Tedlock, 1991).

This theoretical orientation is particularly apt here because more so than with most other fields of interest, I am studying a process of induction itself. The experience of being a trainee Special is essentially structured as a process of socialisation for all similarly situated participants. My task as a researcher (and) trainee is made easier in this regard, since I am interested in the very dialectic of development that characterises the phenomenon (as I have conceived it). Autoethnographic accounts attempt to capture and reveal the transformation, during the field immersion, of the researcher's own way of apprehending the world (Bazsanger and Dodier, 2004). As Ferrell declares, the autoethnographic task compels the researcher 'to make sense of a new or alternative social world, and of [themselves] as an emergent member of it' (2012: 220). Since I will be expected to do this as a practitioner in the first instance, it is contended that the task of chronicling such a transformation for the purpose of the project will be well supported by a theoretical orientation to the narratives of the reconfiguration of self.

3. Auto/ethnography in practice

Having presented autoethnography as the primary method used here, something should be said about what this actually looked like in practice, especially as this project progressed through distinct phases of data collection. Confessional tales about the pragmatics of conducting field research are being increasingly encouraged in socio-legal and criminological circles (Westmarland, 2011), and this project seeks to respond to this call, rendering transparent the design of the fieldwork and its subsequent application.

The training programme as conceptualised by this project involves an initial classroom-based period of formal training, followed by a period of active deployment at a police station. During the first phase, what might be considered a more traditional ethnographic enterprise was undertaken (albeit with a strong autoethnographic awareness) whereby I sought data on the experiences of others alongside my own, with the intention of forming something closer to an integrative impression (Baszanger and Dodier, 2004: 13) of the world of trainee Specials. Although the 'auto' element of personal engagement was still prominent in my data gathering, I was able to engage and interact with other trainees with much more frequency than in the second phase of the training programme. I tried to pay attention to the relational dynamics which structured the field of learning for trainees, and the particular social processes governing their/our early learning careers. Extensive fieldnotes were recorded after leaving the field, documenting my own experiences of the learning environment alongside observations on how others appeared to be adapting to the programme, including the reproduction the conversations we engaged in together regarding our experiences, or interesting comments they would make. Approximately 180 hours over five months were spent in the field during this phase, which generated almost 180,000 words of fieldnotes and reflective pieces.

During this phase I was essentially collecting my data covertly. No others at the training school were aware of my research profile or intentions. These initial trips to the training school were my first forays as an ethnographer, and were heady experiences indeed, with both my trainee police officer and field worker selves trying to find their feet simultaneously. Whilst never being anything less than fully committed to the learning for its own sake, I sometimes found myself distracted by the notion that I ought to be taking more from the setting as a researcher. In my training note books, I

would often leave little prompts to direct me back to observations or reflections, scribbles hidden within the legitimate workings of a student that would mean nothing to fellow trainees or our trainers should they have leafed through the pages. Those early days of juggling my dual identity and grappling with what Ferrell has labelled 'status inconsistency' (2012: 220) were very tiring and tense, and I often felt confused and conflicted.

The second phase involved a different orientation, since the typical learning environment here is no longer one in which trainees continue to develop alongside each other. Rather, the Special is usually assigned to a team of regular officers, working primarily with a tutor constable, and with little interaction with fellow trainees. Occasionally two or more Specials might be working the same shift, or be part of the same operation, in which case they may come into contact with each other during station downtime or even respond to the same jobs where multiple crews are deployed, but the normal experience is for them to operate in isolation amidst a team of full-time colleagues.[4] Inevitably the focus of field data collection turned almost totally inward, and the recollection of my experiences and observations upon my own learning trajectory became the core data gathering process. As will be discussed in detail later, I had also 'come out' as a researcher in the short space between the two phases, and this shift to overt data collection as a complete member had pressing implications for how I conducted myself in the field as both a constable and a critically engaged observer.

It is worth mentioning how this phase unfolded, in terms of how field entries were scheduled and arranged. I sought to tread a careful line here, wanting my Specialing experience to be representative of the average trainee, but also authentic in terms of being about personal choice and commitment. Although the minimum hours of duty required by the force is 16, roughly two shifts a month, it was more common for trainees at my station to undertake nearer 24 hours of duty, which equated to more like three shifts a month. I aspired to work towards this number in the hope of gauging a common kind of experience of the demands of voluntary commitment, but also because I wanted regular immersion in station life to buttress my own continuing development. Similar considerations operated with regards to the kinds of shifts volunteered for. Working around their professional commitments, it is usual for most Specials to volunteer for evening and weekend

[4] And even if more than one trainee is deployed together during a shift they are likely to come from different training cohorts, and so be at different stages of development.

shifts when their team is on duty, and so I made sure to cover a number of these. But again, I also chose those shifts which I thought would be most beneficial to my learning, or simply because I was curious, as someone interested in policing on many levels, to see what would happen (or not) across a night shift in the middle of the week, for instance. During this phase of the training I spent approximately 400 hours in the field across 14 months, also incorporating some additional training days and 'Specials only' operations, which together generated almost 450,000 words of fieldnotes and reflective pieces.

As with the first phase, fieldnotes during this phase were also compiled only after I had left the setting. My usual practice was to jot down a rough chronology of the shift when I returned home from the station, alongside the most salient or pressing observations that struck me afterwards, and then to work these into a detailed narrative account over the coming days. Although I gave myself a freedom to develop my own style of fieldnotes, my discursive yet detailed approach was heavily influenced by the vignettes I had encountered of other police scholars, lifted from their fieldnotes and incorporated into articles and chapters (especially Punch, 1979; Van Maanen, 2011; Westmorland, 2011, and Loftus, 2009).

Whilst other police researchers have been worried about the reactive effect that note taking might have on those around them, only doing so discretely (see Loftus, 2009), I shunned physically making notes during this phase, overtly or covertly, even though I was being overt about my research role at this stage. I felt that doing so would conflate my two roles, and that whilst operationally present in uniform, my only focus should be as a trainee police officer. It would certainly have conflated my roles in the eyes of others had they witnessed me taking notes. Occasionally my colleagues would say or do something, or I would experience something, which seemed especially pertinent to my research questions. In these instances, I sometimes tried to geographically anchor the moment to a specific location, so that it would return to me when recalling the progress of the shift later on, remembering the streets we had been driving around at the time. But even this felt somehow duplicitous, bringing the hazy bifurcation of my presence to the fore, along with the attendant schizophrenic clash of identities which shadowed the whole data gathering experience.

I broke the above covenant on fieldnote-making only once. Stationed on one of several posts within an apartment block where a fatal stabbing had recently taken place, I found myself seated alone in

a darkened corridor guarding a fire escape in case anyone should attempt to access and tamper with the crime scene via this particular (unlikely) route. It was 0600 hours on a Sunday morning and I had been on duty since 2200 the night before. It had been a very busy shift and I was struggling to keep my eyes open. With my only responsibility being to remain alert/awake, I chronologically recorded the passage of the shift in the notes application of my phone as a means to achieve this, briefly sorting the various incidents we had attended into their linear order. The fact that this occupied most of the one and half hours until I was relieved says something about the speed of my thinking by that stage of the shift!

To aid the process of recollection and reflection required for the fieldnote writing, I created a guidance sheet to work from when documenting each encounter, encouraging me to pay attention to those themes I intended to explore (knowledge gains, learning processes, role identity, etc.) but also to be reflexive about the data collection process itself. To this end, I prompted myself to consider the potential for instigating a reactive impact amongst those around me, and to assess the accuracy of the information I was recalling, as well as being honest and open about the ethical dilemmas faced in the field. Such a process of self-assessment was adopted following common concerns regularly raised in the policing studies literature, mainly regarding researcher presentation and the ethical praxis of observing the police (Westmarland, 2001; Spano, 2004; Rowe, 2007). By directing my focus to these areas, I hoped to further the transparency of my research practice, and subsequently promote the integrity of my findings.

Interviewing

As referenced by Anderson and others above, autoethnography requires dialogue with others, data from other sources. As a means of addressing the lack of additional voices from the second phase of the training programme, and to compliment my covert observations of others during the first phase with their own reflections, I carried out a series of interviews with fellow trainees. Not only were these initiated to flesh out an experiential feel for the setting, but they were also sought to test my experiences, highlighting where my own conversion was atypical or unrepresentative.

Two sets of interviews with participants were initially proposed in line with the longitudinal design of the fieldwork, and the longitudinal theoretical framework taken from Van Maanen (1973, 1975). This method of data collection was employed by Fielding during his exploration of regular officer training and socialisation, where attitudinal data gathered at different instances could be used as an 'index of personal change' with participants (1988: 213), and has also been utilised by Chan in her analysis of enculturation within police forces (2003; 2012).

The first round of interviews was set to take place during the first few months after trainees had arrived at their destination station, and the second would follow towards the end of their first year of active duty. Undertaking such a longitudinal schema, would allow me to track the acquisition, development, modification or abandonment of certain framing devices and cultural attitudes as trainees became more established in their roles, and supposedly more competent as officers. It would allow me to explore how their sense of identity had been shaped by frontline experience, both initially and then over time, and to probe the skills (as they defined them) which they felt they had acquired.

When deciding who to involve in this process, a 'non-probability' sampling technique was adopted (Saunders, 2012), whereby specific participants were 'selectively' (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973) or 'purposely' (Patton, 1990) identified as appropriate candidates for interview. That is, I explicitly approached certain individuals based on certain characteristics which they possessed. The central characteristic was that these fellow trainees were also going to stations in my district (a large metropolitan area), or the neighbouring district (with a similar geographic and demographic profile). Trainees from the initial learning phase would disperse to all corners of the force area once attested, some to rural settings and others to more provincial urban districts. For reasons of both practicality and creating more of a concentrated profile of Specialing,[5] a narrower locale was deemed appropriate, although even different stations in the same city can produce very different learning experiences. A gender split was initially proposed to match the ratio of females and males participating in the programme (2:3), also mirrored by respective numbers on the ground on

[5] Manning and Van Maanen (1978: 271 - 2) describe how the specific social contexts within which police officers learn to operate, and thus the experiences they collect, promote 'considerable segmentation in the perceptions' of officers towards their role, and the way they subsequently conduct themselves.

districts. And a mix of ages was chosen too, again roughly representing the spread occurring within my training cohort.

Although these factors contributed to slim down the number of trainees that might 'fit the bill', two other selection criteria were considered. Firstly, I sought to gather a spread of motivations for joining the training programme within the sample, wanting to speak to those interested in applying to join the regular ranks, alongside those for whom this was not an option or aspiration. This was important, given that it could affect the way regular officers treated them, but could also bear upon the role they sought to create for themselves. A second consideration attached to the competency and confidence of trainees, as judged wholly subjectively (and thus potentially fallibly) by myself. I wondered whether those trainees who had appeared to struggle during the training, with the classroom theory and/or the practical applications, would have a different experience on district to those who had appeared more assertive and competent.

Initially choosing a total of nine participants (rounding up to 10 with me included), I therefore created a small bank of trainees with whom I hoped I would be able to explore several dimensions of the learning and development experience. Considering the 'exploratory' aims of this research project (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011), looking to identify pertinent themes from the field and open the phenomenon to further study, and the restrictions imposed by time and resources, it is contended that such a sampling framework was an appropriate means to add insight to such grounded analyses (Saunders, 2012).

As so often happens to the best-laid plans, so the saying goes, this one went awry in two significant ways. The first way in which I was unable to deliver the planned design came through my inability to convince any of my fellow female trainees to partake in the interviews. Crucially, as will be relayed in the next section on ethics, I sought out interview participants not long after 'coming out' as a researcher, and this was only a week or so after leaving behind the training school environment. Therefore, even where I had previously established friendly rapport with female trainees, since altering their awareness of me regarding my research project, I was unable to get them to commit to the interviews. I did not have a huge range of female trainees to approach as participants given that I wanted to maintain some consistency in participant selection as above, but none of those who

would have been suitable ever became involved. Some made vague commitments that were never followed through, others politely declined, and others still simply never responded.

The second way in which I was not able to fulfil the sampling framework concerned the completion of the longitudinal design. Whilst I had no problems finding participants for the first round of interviews with male trainees, the second round proved more problematic. In fact, I was not able to conduct a follow-up interview with any of the five participants for a wide range of reasons. One stopped volunteering after only a handful of shifts and made it clear he did not want to engage again, and another moved away to pursue a permanent position in another force. A third was similarly vague and non-committal. And the period in which I had scheduled to complete them also became flooded with other personal commitments as I made my transition into the regular ranks of the police.

Recounting these failures is in part a confessional tale of research practicalities, as well as an honest appraisal of where this study will meet obvious limitations. Given the need for dialogue with others to supplement the predominantly autoethnographically collated data, this research falls shorter than initially hoped in its capacity to contextualise and explore the themes that arise from my subjective experiences and reflections. Although the first round of interviews completed are rich with data, they cannot shed further light on how female trainees experienced the process of enculturation, or furnish the longitudinal narrative of my own experiences with fresh insights and counterpoints. However, this is not to say the whole research agenda has failed, and due regard will be paid in the conclusion as to how future data might be explored considering what this project is modestly able to achieve.

It should be noted here that for those first round interviews that were completed, semi-structured interview schedules were drawn up in advance, but on each occasion, I sought to give trainees as much narrative space as possible to relay their experiences and observations, rarely having to direct interaction to cover those aspects of the process I wanted to capture through our discourse. This technique contributed to almost nine hours of discussion and reflection in total, which when reviewed provided many illuminating aspects of experience and observation, and which aligned and diverged with those of my own.

Summing up

Since the objective of the project is to discover and digest the lived experiences of those entering the Special Constabulary, looking at how they learn to make sense of police work and their new social world, and how this affects the way they conduct themselves as officers, it is contended that a qualitative approach permits a much more sensitive identification and exploration of the pertinent issues than would a survey approach, for example. Questionnaires could not expose the intricacies of personal experience which this project hopes to capture and convey, nor could they uncover the ways in which contextual features of the setting shape the learning career of trainees.

It is further contended that the combination of three elements (ethnography, autoethnography, and interviews) enabled me to accumulate a wealth of richly sourced and detailed data on the lived experiences of training as a Special, and to capture the essence of both the initial learning programme and the following immersion in frontline duties, albeit in slightly different ways. Bringing these streams of data together in such a 'triangulated' enterprise (Denzin, 1970) opens several access routes to the world under study, promoting a more nuanced and reflexively complex rendering of the landscape. These separate sources were sought to give context to the autoethnographic data, not to support it necessarily, but to seek out the possibility of differing perspectives and experiences from the ground, and to celebrate these as significant and important. However, as Becker has said, 'just as the researcher is more convinced if he has many items of evidence, so he is more convinced of a conclusion's validity if he has many kinds of evidences' (1958: 657).

The intentions of the project were never to construct or represent an ideal-type of the Special or the Specialing experience, but merely to examine the field and suggest some schemes of analysis for approaching this particular breed of officer, giving special prominence to their voices through the text. When set together in the resultant analysis, it is hoped that the data gathered here present a multi-faceted and insightful portrayal of the social world of Special Constables, elucidating the processes of development through which induction into that world is achieved, and isolating those cultural currents that explain how Specials learn to make sense of their environment and role.

This study also sets out to explore the structural conditions of the setting, seeking to understand something of the field of policing within which Specials must negotiate their role, and the impact

that this environment has on the acquisition of their cultural knowledge. The theoretical position set out above, however, suggests a strong interpretivist bent to the analysis, especially given the prominence afforded to my own subjective experiences of conversion in this field. Is it possible therefore to accommodate a structuralist analysis as well?

It is contended that such an 'integrated' methodological approach is consistent with the data gathered, and the theoretical perspectives available to socio-legal study. Although a key aim here has been to give trainee Specials a voice in the literature, promoting the 'practitioner's point of view', this does not negate the capacity of the analysis to appreciate the context within which those voices learn to speak, and suggest how this might impact upon the things they come to talk about. Attempting to give space to the trainees' perspectives, whilst also appraising the salient features of the environment that shape and condition them, does not dismiss the agency of the actors under study, yet pays due regard to the determining features of the setting, providing both a descriptive and explanatory context for the subsequent analysis. This project seeks to highlight both the autonomy of individuals within the socialisation process, as well as the wider conditioning features with which they will negotiate and interact as they learn the craft of policing. In acknowledging both aspects, this thesis will be clear about the ways in which the data gathered is being used to address them (See Becker, 1958).

4. Research ethics

Confronting and contesting the ethics of fieldwork practice is an integral feature of any ethnographic project. Just as researchers have been encouraged to say more about the practical aspects of how their methods played out in the field, a similar climate of reflexivity asks researchers to share their experiences of ethical decisions and dilemmas made and encountered during the course of their studies; to open up for debate the strategies they utilised, and the principles they sought to pursue whilst conducting research with human participants. As Darlington and Scott lament, 'few qualitative researchers have described in detail the ethical and political processes of 'getting in, getting on and getting out' of their research settings' (2002: 31).

Of course, ethics are intrinsically tied to methods, and could very appropriately be addressed alongside one another. The means that one uses to collect data from a setting will entail certain ethical conditions and operationalise certain concerns, and the way in which these are negotiated will play a central part in deciding the propriety of the research design selected. I have decided to address these conditions and concerns separately to pay them due regard. Acknowledging the extent of my participation in the field, and the idiosyncrasies of that particular field and its members, considered attention, explanation, and confession is required if this project is to achieve the standards of integrity sought.

Presence and profile in the field

As identified above, a central ingredient of a study's ethnographic recipe is the level of participation which the researcher seeks with members of the field, and the important bearing this will have on the flavour and consistency of the resultant text. Inherently related is the self-presentation to members of the field that the researcher attempts to deploy, and the prominence given here to explaining the data-collecting intent behind their presence. One can sit on the side-lines scribbling away and be overt about what one is doing, or one can become a central member of a group and not tell anyone about one's research objectives.

The majority of policing studies are conducted by what Brown (1996) has called 'outsider, outsiders'; researchers without frontline experience of policing, independent of the forces they investigate, and writing primarily from and for the academy (although it could be argued now that the current importance of impact, engagement and co-design within the REF agenda has shifted this profile somewhat). They overtly approach constabularies with independently conceived problems to investigate, and (if successful) are granted access to speak to and/or observe participants as the subjects, or data providers, for their study. They are 'participant' observers in a moderate sense, the opposite of the complete member, even if they occasionally get asked to watch a suspect or note down a number plate; usually as a means to test their trustworthiness (see Punch, 1979; Loftus, 2009; Cain, 1973).

Within this literature, debate duly abounds about the ability for such outsider researchers to access the field in its most naturally occurring forms; that is, their capacity to witness policing as practiced as if it was not being witnessed at all. Reactivity or 'data contamination', whereby the presence of the researcher affects the performance of those whose world is under study, is a common concern across all types of ethnographic research, but is an especially pertinent issue when researching the police (Punch, 1977; Goold, 2004; Loftus, 2009). The likelihood of being able to watch the police at their natural work, unhindered by anxieties about the potential for over-exposure in the presence of observers, is questioned by some commentators wary of the secretive, protective culture within which officers operate, and which their practices sustain (see especially Holdaway, 1983).[6] Reiner and Newburn identify this protectiveness as a factor of policing's intimate relationship with social control, and their exclusive mandate to resort to violent or coercive measures with legitimacy: 'The tactics used for accomplishing this', they claim, 'are almost inevitably going to be controversial even if they are legal, and they are frequently of dubious legality or clearly illegal' (2008: 353). This breeds an inherent scepticism of outsiders and their intentions amongst frontline police cultures, and a chariness that scrutiny and censure will follow should they open up their inner world. As a result, officers may be inclined to put on an acceptable front, a veil of appropriateness which obscures their working realities.

In light of this, considerable thought was given to how I should present myself to the field when devising the study. Knowing that access *as a trainee* was already established, a choice was to be made whether to go into the field announcing my dual ambition (to train and research simultaneously) or to leave this latter aspect hidden. A corresponding choice involved who this should be announced to, if anyone at all. Of course, such choices were constrained by many factors, and central among these were the ethical principles which needed to be accounted for (on both a personal and procedural level).

Codes of ethics have a somewhat ambivalent place in contemporary social science discourse, sometimes seen as decontextualized strictures unresponsive to the practicalities of field research (Haggerty, 2004). However, as a point of departure they bring certain issues to the fore for the novice researcher, and promote a considered engagement with the wider world (requiring

[6] See Loftus (2009: 204) for claims made in support of achieving a minimal reactive presence amongst police participants. Although she herself concedes it is 'problematic to suggest that a researcher can gain access to all areas of police life'.

reflection on potential participants now and in the future, the disciplines and institutions to which researchers belong, and the other individuals found therein, as well as the researcher themselves), especially where ethical review committees are to be encountered. With this in mind, both the Socio-Legal Studies Association and the British Society of Criminology generally disavow the use of covert methods, except in the most exceptional of circumstances where the research can be demonstrated as 'substantially in the public interest' (see codes of ethics for SLSA, 2009: 7.5.2; and BSC, 2006: 4.3). The imperative to conduct such 'essential' research can only be invoked where the data relate to powerful groups who should be publicly accountable (Wells, 2004; Dodds, 2004). In his seminal covert study of modern policing cultures, Holdaway (1982; 1983) justified his approach on such a basis, arguing from an 'assessment of the power of the police within British Society and their demonstrably secretive character' (1982: 64). Although this project does seek to contribute in small part to Reiner's call for the modern 'replication of the classic observational studies of police work' (2000: 225), of which he holds Holdaway's as representative, it does not promote Holdaway's contention that such a study of Specialing is 'essential', to the point of completely concealing the research agenda. Such an assessment was certainly influenced by the expectation that senior management would today be more approachable than those to whom Holdaway would have presented himself (Reiner and Newburn 2008: 358). And my aims, in researching the training of volunteer officers, were not so ambitious or arguably important as were his.

Although I do believe there is a strong case for this area to be investigated, it was agreed with my supervisors that several factors necessitated seeking permission to conduct the study. The implications for other researchers, both locally, nationally, and in the future should my research be 'uncovered' could be highly detrimental, with constabularies much less likely to trust the academy and the promotion of mutually constructive research relationships likely to be damaged. So too I risked bringing the name of my University, and the wider field within which my work was located, into disrepute. Such 'environmental pollution' was considered too serious a risk (Homan, 1991). Rather, it was agreed that approval for the project should be sought from the force prior to the commencement of my training. In identifying who to pitch to, contacts were utilised through my primary supervisor at the time, and the force's Head of Human Resources was approached as the initial 'gatekeeper' (Saunders, 2006). Although the project fell within their area of responsibility, this individual also took my proposal to the force's Chief Officers Group to ascertain their reaction (a

senior management group constituted by the Chief, Deputy and Assistant Chief Constables). Much to my surprise (and my supervisor's), the green light was given with minimal fuss or delay.

But what of those who would be the participants of my study, the individuals I would train beside, and those that would deliver the training? Covert means should only be considered, Wells contends, where issues of necessity and data quality rule out other methodological approaches. While necessity stands for 'essential' in terms of the pressing claims made to investigate certain sites of power where accountability is at stake, it is also blended with the concept of data quality in an assessment of the most effective way to enter a field without disturbing its members in order to extract the most valid data (2004). Progressive social science discourse should acknowledge that all researchers exert a reactive influence upon the fields they interact with, whether covertly or overtly, and that all observations are intrinsically artificial in this regard. However, a covert approach minimises the problems of reactivity since participants are not aware that they are interacting *with a researcher* (Miller, 2011).

In light of these field-specific concerns, Brown (1996) concludes that perhaps the *only* way to access the social worlds of policing without distortion is to operate as an 'outsider, insider'; as a fellow officer to those being researched, but one who conceals their research agenda, writing covertly for an academic audience. Kinship is achieved, understanding is acquired, and crucially, guards are down. This drastically reduces the opportunities for researchers to effectively access the field, with only those who have undergone some kind of official induction into the policing fold able to capture valid data (Holdaway, 1983). In this regard, the already granted access to train as a Special appeared to present a unique opening to investigate this particular phenomenon of interest.

In addition to the above, it was also contended that there were grounds for concealing my identity as researcher from participants *for their own sakes* – and that this would be the most ethically sensitive position to adopt. Knowing that there was a researcher in their midst, it was argued, was very likely to disrupt the learning environment of the training programme for both trainers and trainees. The former might feel that their performance was being assessed and scrutinised, whilst the latter might also feel uncomfortable at the thought of being research 'subjects' at the same time as they underwent a potentially challenging and intimidating course of development and assessment. Course facilitators might have felt the need to re-organise the training programme to

incorporate a researcher, pairing my programme of learning with those they considered likely to offer the most 'presentable' form of training, and this could have involved disruption or anxiety.

Thinking beyond the classroom phase to the accompanied patrol alongside regular officers on the street, it was expected that these officers would feel unsure as to how much could be expected of me in the role of a Special if they were aware of the research – whether I could be depended upon to perform certain tasks, and whether I would do so with appropriate attention and commitment (perhaps assuming that I would be too focussed on collecting data). This would likely cause concern regarding how much support could be expected from me, and frustration perhaps at having to 'babysit' someone not fully committed to the role or their colleagues. Even though I intended from the outset to wholeheartedly commit to the demands and expectations of the role, it was anticipated that convincing other officers of this would be difficult, given the scepticism and wariness with which the rank-and-file were likely to view me as a participant observer. Taking this all into account, it felt as though covert entry and participation in the field represented the least intrusive form of observation in this particular instance, and that this was an important ethical value to further in itself. A debriefing programme was proposed to take place at the end of my probationary year, where all participants would be retrospectively informed about the research, and any concerns duly addressed.

With permission secured from the force, the argument for covert research was put to the Law School's research ethics committee, who in turn forwarded it to the Faculty level for consideration. To my even greater surprise, my petition was officially endorsed here as well, subject to a condition that I should meet regularly with a member of the Law School's research ethics committee to discuss any emerging ethical dilemmas or difficulties, and that I submit a comprehensive report on the debriefing process upon completion of the project.[7] Thus, in early 2013, I drove to the force's training facility and registered for the programme, putting on my uniform but keeping my other persona concealed. I told the people I met that I was studying Law at post-graduate level, but did not explain that my programme of study was largely research-based, or that I was researching the very setting that brought us together.

[7] Such a report was duly submitted and accepted by the Chair of the Law School's research ethics committee.

Additional commitments were made regarding the conduct of the project, to both the force and the University, before the fieldwork commenced, and then subsequently put into practice. Assurances were given to extend complete confidentiality and anonymity to the organisation and all individuals with whom I would come into contact with. Local geographies (including building names, street names, districts etc.) were concealed beneath fictionalised entities, and the dates of field entries were not aligned with fieldnotes. Personal data of any kind was never included in my fieldnotes as I anonymised all parties during the initial recordings and reflections, trying as much as possible to avoid documenting details that could lead to someone being identified. In my analysis, all officers (Specials and regulars alike) were given pseudonyms, and additional devices were employed to conceal identities through the sharing of field data (a discussion of this during the tutorship phase is postponed to chapter six). When interviewing, all participants were thoroughly briefed on the project and asked to sign consent forms regarding their involvement. Complete confidentiality and anonymity was given here too (although several participants actually declared that they were happy to be quoted in person). Finally, the collated research data was stored in hidden folders on University systems and backed up on a single safely secured hard drive.

Ethics on the ground

A warning to any researcher thinking of deploying convert methods such as these: if you are not comfortable with personally practicing subterfuge in other aspects of your life, you are probably not going to like the experience. I had read Holdaway's discussion of the 'strain' of covert research, of the internal stresses wrought by awareness of one's own duplicity (1983: 9 - 11) but was not suitably put off. It is one thing to argue for the methodological and ethical appropriateness of covert research, but another thing altogether to actively carry it out. Considering my innate incapacity to lie convincingly and my generally guilty disposition anyway, it was perhaps naïve of me to select such an approach.[8] Although somewhat contented by my constructive (rather than critical) intentions for the project, and my strong commitment to ensure the research would not impact

[8] When I admitted this at a later date, having already begun the training school phase, my supervisors did comment that perhaps I should have raised this with them at the start!

negatively upon those involved, I was not happy in truth, and as I started to near the end of my classroom training, I became increasingly wary about the strategy I had adopted.

Continued ethical reflection throughout a project's lifespan is mandated by the practicalities and vagaries of field research. Ethical *codes* in abstract are useless on the ground if seen as prescriptive parameters as to how one should act. Rather, they must be operationalised as *values* (Homan, 1992) within the context of the field setting, and the situational developments which the researcher confronts ought to prompt continuous reassessment of what their ethical obligations require (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). I found myself seriously doubting the appropriateness of my covert presence as the prospect of station deployment grew closer. As my induction into the policing field progressed and the process of socialisation took hold, I came to understand just how central the values of trust and interdependence were to the working culture I was apprenticed to. I began to doubt my ability at the end of a year on the streets to successfully debrief those officers who had assisted my learning without causing significant resentment and anxiety. Becoming ever more aware of coming demands, I imagined partaking in frontline duties alongside colleagues whom I would be dependent upon and who might well be depending upon me. I realised I would feel very uncomfortable in my role as an officer if the intense working relationships I was to foster were founded on such base deception. Although I never intended to actively lie to hide my project, and was even committed to 'owning up' if ever challenged about my dual presence, I still felt that not being fully open with my contemporaries and colleagues was a deceptive front to present. But I also felt a growing confidence – in contrast to my initial hypothesising about the field – that if I could prove myself as a competent, committed Special that officers would actually look beyond my researcher profile, and might even be interested in the project

The natural period of limbo between finishing the end of my training and doing my first shifts on district presented an opportune window to 'come out' to those around me, and with permission given from the force and Faculty Ethics Committee to do so, I begun to initiate a programme of debriefing and briefing. I met and spoke with the Specials senior management for my station, and with the head trainer of the initial learning package. The latter agreed to debrief all other trainers on my behalf and provide them with a project brief. I sent an email to those I had trained alongside, explaining what the project was about. To all these individuals I stressed my worries about having an intrusive effect on the training programme had I been overt from start, offered to meet with

them to discuss any concerns, and reassured them that complete confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed. I did not receive any negative responses, and several Specials even volunteered to assist me with the research. At the same time as retrospectively dealing with my presence, I set about preparing the ground for my arrival at the station. Thinking about how best to do this caused me a great deal of consternation, and continued to do so throughout the duration of my probationary deployment as I attempted to manage my dual identities.

Ethics on the frontline

Even though my regular colleagues would not be the subjects of my study themselves, they still felt like participants in some sense. I would be learning from them, watching what they did and listening to what they said, and then reflecting on this afterwards. They would find their way into my fieldnotes, since my experience of the field as a Special would be fundamentally shaped by their input. My initial thought, in line with a more rudimentary understanding of informed consent, was to take a proclamatory approach, distributing project briefs to all in my station in advance of my first shift, being introduced at briefings by sergeants, perhaps even having a poster on a wall with my picture and a quick summation of my research intentions. But I didn't like this idea on reflection. It felt like going too far, making too much noise. Although I wanted to bring my research role to the awareness of those I would work in close proximity to, I didn't want it to obscure my membership status as a Special. Experienced Specials had warned us during training that gaining the trust of regular colleagues was hard enough as it was.

Instead, I attempted to instigate a more fluid, flexible strategy. I spoke to my tutor constable and team sergeant on the phone before coming in for my first shift, detailing my project whilst striving to assure them of my commitment to the office for its own sake. I felt this was essential seeing as I would be working closely with both, and they would effectively be responsible for my development and accountable for my actions to a degree. I stopped at this though, wanting to build relationships with others on the ground first, and introducing the research later. This was not about data collection and reactive responses; it was about feeling secure as a Special, wanting to settle at the station and not feel exposed or isolated. Considering the potentially dangerous situations which we could be called upon to face, and my vulnerability as a part-time officer with minimal training and

even less experience of frontline environments, I felt that this was an ethically sound position to adopt. I endeavoured to discuss the project with extended colleagues over time, and every occasion I was sworn at, spat at, or vomited on, or found myself required to handle a dead body, restrain a suspect, or take out my handcuffs, I felt more comfortable that colleagues would be able to disassociate my work in uniform from my work in university. I hoped to instigate a kind of grapevine awareness, where knowledge of my presence as a researcher could spread informally after I had established myself as trustworthy colleague in the first instance.

This was not an easy position to maintain, however. Although I continued to try to find some succour in the constructive, collaborative premises of my research, and my inward declaration to personally make sure that the project could not cause harm to others, it was a constantly complex and tiring balancing of roles to sustain. I often encountered people who I did not feel comfortable to broach the research with at the time, worried that it might have implications for my reception as an officer. I tried to talk about it where I could, and regularly had in-depth discussions with some officers as we drove around on patrol. They declared that it made no difference to them, and often offered very candid assessments and advice about practical policing which seemed to back this up. It was clear from the way they conducted themselves that they were not fazed by my social-scientific pre-occupations. But where others were less aware, or sometimes not at all, I could not help feeling as if I was still operating covertly again (and in truth I often was).

As others have recognised, consent to a researcher's presence is not a one-time deal, and those gathering data need to be honest about the overtness of their empirical role at different stages (and with different people) throughout their time in the field (Reiner 2010; Goold, 2004). Working from a complete member basis, where participants hopefully come to see you as a status equal, makes this very difficult to gauge. This was especially so in my case, because I was at pains to prove that status equality and commitment, worried about the impact my researcher profile might have on my acceptance within the station if given too much prominence. This meant that things were often said in my presence, or sometimes done in front of me, that made me feel especially deceitful, where I felt my researcher role was underestimated, forgotten or sometimes unknown. This was never more the case than when issues surrounding misconduct and the use of force came to the fore.

Whistleblowing

The ethical obligations placed upon police researchers who witness acts of brutality, deviance, or malpractice are keenly contested in the literature (Westmarland, 2001; Rowe, 2005; Norris, 1993; Loftus, 2009). A central tenet of social science research suggests that researchers should avoid causing harm to their subjects/participants as a result of their unnatural incursion into the field (McCosker et al., 2001). But what should happen when those subjects are witnessed engaged in clear and harmful illegality, especially where their actions perpetuate and exploit the vulnerability of marginalised, disempowered persons? And even more importantly, where those subjects have been trusted to utilise force and coercion against members of the public in pursuit of legitimate, lawful ends? It is little wonder that so much fretting has taken place amongst police researchers before, during, and after their stints in this field (see especially Westmarland, 2001; Rowe, 2005).

In relation to witnessing the excessive use of force, Westmarland concludes that the decision to report such behaviour 'can only be personal, based on the moral and ethical beliefs of the individual' (2001: 533). She identifies two main dilemmas for researchers in such situations. The first regards the actual recognition of acts that are 'excessive' or 'unreasonable'. Not only is this a very subjective judgement in the first instance, it is clouded by the disorientating situations that researchers (and police officers) find themselves in, and by feelings of solidarity or loyalty towards those being researched.[9] The second dilemma regards what to do next, if such a call is made and the decision is taken to inform on the officer(s) in question. Who should the researcher go to: a police supervisor, or an academic one? Some other authority, such as the IOPC? The media?

During the design stage as I was preparing to enter the field and presenting my case for ethical approval, I submitted that such ethical dilemmas would not fall upon me in my capacity *as a researcher*. This was because my ethical obligations *as a Special* would require me to report all instances of misconduct to senior officers. I was told this in no uncertain terms during my initial access meeting, and threatened with immediate dismissal (as would be the fate of any other officer) should it transpire that I neglected to report an incident of unreasonable force or misconduct that I had witnessed. Although aware of the likelihood of cultural pressures against reporting (Chan, 2003;

[9] The phenomenon of police researchers coming to identify and empathise with their subjects the longer they are exposed to their social world is well documented in the literature (see Spano, 2005), and presents a particular problem in my own study.

Loftus, 2010), I proposed that organisational requirements would take a helpful precedence over the ethical conundrums potentially posed to the researcher. I also declared that I held a firm commitment to procedural legitimacy and fairness, and would not be shy in the face of such pressures. Further than this, I would not have to worry myself with the moral dilemmas of potentially bringing harm to my research participants; I would instead be able to see them as colleagues whose professionalism I now had a stake in ensuring.

As I was to discover many times, planning for a research study and performing it are very different things. At the end of my first weekend of training I received a very cursory lesson on professional standards and police ethics. I came away understanding the formal need to disclose instances of 'professional misconduct', which, because of my lack of awareness regarding police rules and procedure at that time, and the sparse treatment provided to the concept in the session, related only to the use of unreasonable force. Yet not having studied or interpreted those powers that governed the use of force, I had only an intuitive, lay sense of what they might mean in context. When I came to address these issues during weekend seven in several sessions on handcuffing, restraint techniques, and use of batons and incapacitant spray, the bounds of reasonable force were explored in depth, alongside the relevant legal provisions (notably Section 3 of The Criminal Law Act 1967, and Section 117 of The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, as well as common law powers). Although many situations were discussed and envisaged, and the directive was very clear that such force must be proportionate, legal, accountable, and necessary at all times, it still remained a somewhat amorphous concept because of its contextual dependency. Roleplays were of little use here, and the main source of learning came from trainers' tales from the field.

That police officers have been observed to employ a cultural interpretation of what is 'reasonable' which conflicts with researchers' interpretations of those statutory provisions is evident from the reflections of Westmarland and others. The problem for me was that I was being inducted into a culture where such an interpretation was the moral norm; an understanding that I was having to grapple with as I configured my dispositions in the role. The practical boundary of reasonable force is a complex issue to be considered in due course, but it is a boundary that shifts and depends upon a myriad of situational factors. Much of the rationales for action in this regard are drawn from the stockpile of collective wisdom on how to approach such encounters, which can only emerge through the acquisition and practice of cultural knowledge. As discussed in the previous chapter, much of

this issues from the orientation towards anxiety avoidance, deploying standardised responses that are defensive and risk averse. Developing this point further in the subsequent analysis, I will also contend that the academic discussion on the use of force must pay attention to the experiential feel of those incidents that give rise to such occupational perspectives. In chapter seven I reflect in detail on being assaulted myself, and the subsequent effect it had on my actions and outlook. I also discuss how realigning myself to cultural perspectives on the use of force was a significant socialisation factor.

Witnessing incidents of coercive tactics, being party to informal debriefings in their aftermath, and hearing war stories and other accounts of 'bundling' and 'scrapping', gave me, as an officer, a practical sense of what kind of situations the use of force could become a feature of, what kinds of actions were culturally acceptable or not, and why. As a fellow officer, I was also made aware of the cultural inclination to support colleagues, especially where they may have acted to assist or protect you. During my early shifts I sometimes found myself exposed to incidents or toeing a line that I did not feel entirely happy with; not necessarily as a Special or a researcher, but simply as an individual caught up for the first time in situations that were both ethically complex and physically and emotionally charged, and which I was trying to get my head around on several levels.

Returning to Westmarland's two dilemmas, being a Special therefore did not necessarily make it easier to identify instances of unreasonable force. In fact, it made it arguably harder, seeing as I now found myself situated in an environment in which reasonableness had a contingent and culturally loaded interpretation. I had to process working understandings which extended the concept, privy to additional contextual concerns which a lay perspective might not have considered (or considered valid). But I was also experiencing induction into a system that had its own normative position on when and how to express disapproval or concern about colleagues' malpractice. And negotiating these aspects of my fledgling membership was not something I was able to fully appreciate at the stage of drafting my application for ethical approval.

Nor did being a Special make the dilemma of what to do in response much easier either. Although I knew that instances of gross misconduct should be reported up the chain, I did not know to whom exactly. Should I speak to my Sergeant as my immediate supervisor, or to my Inspector because of the seriousness of the matter? Or should I raise the matter through the Special Constabulary

hierarchy? The procedural and cultural requirements for Specials here, as well as the directions for alternatively reporting incidents to the Professional Standards department, were never made clear to me during my training. Had I confronted these issues, I would of course have endeavoured to find out, supported and encouraged by my academic supervisors.

Summing up

The above discussion has sought to convey the constant reflexive awareness that I experienced throughout the duration of the fieldwork, and the impacts that this had on me as both a Special and a researcher. It was often a very tiring experience, trying to learn the craft I had willingly apprenticed myself to, whilst at the same time working through the anxieties about the fairness of my research presence, or rather the fairness with which I allowed others to access and respond to it. Over the course of my training I made several strong friendships, often feeling close camaraderie with these individuals, both in and out of uniform. At the station I was invited to social gatherings and welcomed into the team dynamic, and I also kept up several friendships with trainees from my cohort. And yet I documented the things they said and did, with their differing states of awareness of this, and sometimes in conjunction with critical or negative reflection on my part. Of course, I would have experienced these reactions and reflections were I not conducting the study. But replaying and probing them through the medium of my fieldnotes and subsequent analysis cast a shroud of artificiality over the relationships I had developed.

I am reluctant to make any apologies for this strategy, however, at least not to those outside of the field I found myself immersed in. I never forgot my place(s), being always fully committed to becoming a Special in the first instance, and conscious to at least try to spread awareness of my project where possible. It is hard to imagine how anything other than such a situated approach to some of the ethical issues discussed above could have been achieved, and at the same time allow me to successfully fulfil my role. That a research study has also been completed, and some (hopefully) interesting findings adduced without causing disruption or distress to participants, is the result of constant reflection upon, and reassessment of, the various competing demands entailed by conducting a project like this.

Chapter 4

Stage 1: Entry

Anticipatory socialisation in the volunteer police

This chapter begins my analysis of the field, considering Van Maanen's first stage in the socialisation process – *entry* (1975). Whist this stage will not be explored to the same depths as those subsequent, engagement is important here to demonstrate how many of the focal themes that will echo throughout the thesis were present at this initial stage. However, it should be noted that the majority of this stage occurred prior to my research access to the site being granted by the force in question, and ethically approved by the University. This is because much of it preceded my selection of the area as the focus of doctoral research. Therefore, I have little directed personal data to reflect on, and had very minimal exposure to other candidates' experiences (although there were some data sources that I could remotely access).

However, at the time of progressing through the recruitment phase I was also undertaking courses in sociological and socio-legal research methods as part of my initial research training. Unsurprisingly, I very much enjoyed learning about ethnographic methods, and it was here that I first discovered the police ethnography literature. As I progressed through the recruitment phase, I decided to explore some of my experiences of the process simply as a means of practicing ethnographic approaches and experimenting with the medium. These notes (very few in number) were unfocussed and cursory, although even without an awareness of the themes I would later chose to explore, they are revealing. Of course, this 'data collection', even if not intended as such at the time, was still undertaken completely covertly.

I contend there are several reasons why reviewing these texts to prompt my recollections of this stage is legitimate and ethically sound. Firstly, the fact that access was subsequently granted and approved to the field endorses retrospective consideration of these 'field notes'. The processes and experiences that I was later to focus on were potentially much more contentious and impactful than the ones I will explore here, and yet agreement was achieved. Similarly, my entry to the field here

was not undertaken to further research interests, but simply to pass the recruitment phase. And further, at this stage, as *was* the case during my training, I *was not* yet a member of the organisation, and so had no commitments to uphold in terms of conduct or expectations. The notes were also recorded without documenting any personal information on the participants, and when authorisation to study the field was received, they were stored in the same way as other collated data.

This chapter proceeds in three sections. Firstly, the concept of *anticipatory socialisation* will be explored in relation to policing organisations, along with the accompanying concept of *status elevation* that drives interest in policing. Secondly, the recruitment phase for Specials will be examined in light of these concepts, including discussion on the images of Specialing that are conveyed to prospective trainees by those who gatekeep access to the institution. The chapter will then conclude with some observations on the process of Specialing itself as another form of anticipatory socialisation for those who hope to one day join the regular ranks.

1. Anticipatory socialisation and status elevation

Anticipatory socialisation was introduced in chapter 2 as a focal feature of organisational socialisation. In Van Maanen's longitudinal model, he delineates a distinct stage of the socialisation process which takes place even before any formal induction, or 'introduction', has begun (1975). Others have described it an important 'pre-stage' in the socialisation journey (Brown, 1991). Either way, the stage is initiated from the moment the prospective future member imagines their attainment of membership status, and undertakes whatever activities are necessary to achieve it. As a process, pre-professional socialisation of recruit candidates has been recognised as serving 'to generate professional commitment, [and] aids in the adoption of professional identities' (Conti, 2006: 222). However, some commentators have suggested that the precise mechanisms of this process and their specific impact on individuals in the wider socialisation process are hard to assess, and should not be overstated (Fielding, 1988 in Charman, 2017: 101). It is important to recognise that the dynamic of the stage is driven by the recruit's appreciation and acceptance of the role the

organisation is offering. What they think the role will entail, and their motivations for wanting to undertake it, draw them closer to the organisation as they enter and then progress through the recruitment process.

Anticipatory socialisation will happen in the first instance on a very personal level, with the individual becoming aware of the opportunity to join the group and assessing their own motivations for joining. This might be triggered by targeted media campaigning or promoted through informal friendship or familial networks with existing police personnel (Fielding, 1988; Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017). Alternatively, it might be something that happens in isolation, where background awareness mixes with diverse motivational factors to prompt an interest in the group in question.

Anticipatory socialisation can quickly gather momentum following attendance at recruitment awareness/interest events. Here members of the organisation play an active role in fermenting and developing anticipation on behalf of the recruits. But there is also a sense in which anticipatory socialisation is promoted amongst prospective members by the process itself, as much as by the individual actors within it. Police recruitment in all its forms is characterised by a long, drawn out process (Charman, 2017). Application processes often require several rounds of assessment, through which candidates must keep progressing to have a chance of success. This promotes resilience and dedication, with each success positively reaffirming the applicant's determination to achieve the sought-after status. The sheer volume of applications that often accompany recruitment campaigns to the police require time to process and sort, and detailed background checks need to be undertaken on applicants given the nature of the role. These factors combine to delay and frustrate the acquisition of the coveted membership status, but this can also foster a growing anticipation by steeling the resolve of the applicants and refocussing their impatience towards excitement. As Van Maanen concludes, '[the] protracted screening factor associated with police work is a most critical aspect of the socialisation process. The nature of the long, arduous selection procedure…assures those that who join the occupation will have strong positive attitudes concerning their new job. And the attitudes on day one confirm this' (1975: 221).

Status elevation

In his autoethnographic analysis of the recruitment of regular officers in America, Conti (2006) utilised the concept of 'status elevation' to explore how applicants to the training process seek 'self-actualisation' by achieving their aspired-to goal of becoming a police officer. The role is viewed by aspiring recruits as bestowing a 'superior moral identity', the acquisition of which will elevate their status within their communities (2006: 230). Various streams of influence will coalesce to promote this persuasion within the individual, often involving the desire to impress friends and family by attaining a role associated with service and honour. This is especially strong in cases where the individual has friends or family from a police background (Fielding, 1988). The stimulus of media representations and popular culture imagery also feeds aspiring candidates' visions of their future selves, and even where these are detached from reality, provide motivation, and provoke anticipation for a role associated with action and intrigue (Chan, 2003).

A further important research finding suggests that aspirants will often already possess many of the dominant socials norms, perceptual orientations, and moral standards that are the bedrock of traditional police values and shared occupational culture, and that the selection procedures imposed on potential candidates attempt to ensure that only conformists are successful (Kappeler, Sluder and Alpert, 1998). Not only are those who seek such status elevation likely to find the role a close fit, organisations work to dissuade those who might not.

Building on Conti, it is possible to delineate distinct levels of anticipated elevation in the pre-professional socialisation of officers. Firstly, there is anticipation to simply be selected to join the training programme and attend the training school phase. Progressing to this stage already confers a significant degree of attainment, considering the number of applicants who unsuccessfully apply, and the rigours of passing all the intellectual, physical, medical, and vetting tests required. It should not be underestimated that just to be selected as a successful applicant in itself is a substantial status elevation. Indeed, Conti's whole study was focussed on this aspect alone, irrespective of trainees' further aspirations to subsequently become elevated to officer status (2006).

This second anticipated status elevation involves the completion of the academy phase and the acquisition of officer status. Although this anticipated elevation provides the main focus for the majority of candidates approaching the recruitment process, such a status cannot automatically be

assumed even after selection onto a training course considering the academic and physical demands, and behavioural expectations, placed on trainees to pass the academy phase.

This distinction is important because the academy phase can then be viewed as part of the wider anticipatory socialisation process, whereby trainees absorb the various influences of their surroundings and rehearse their fledgling practice in line with what they anticipate life to be like at the station once they are elevated to officer status. Everything that occurs at the training school, whilst a distinct phase of socialisation in itself, carries the hallmarks and momentum of the anticipatory socialisation which preceded it.

Elevated to what?

At this point it is important to draw a further distinction between prospective regular and prospective volunteer officers, because the perceived status elevation to officer level is very different for each group. For those aspiring to a regular officer role, the position brings not only the supposed moral status referred to above, but a *professional* identity with a plethora of symbolic overtones. It also confers very significant social implications; not least a full-time wage, with accompanying group insurance and pension options, but also the implications of shift work, and the associated camaraderie of being embedded within a team. For those interested in the role of Specials, much of the above is unavailable, and cannot be aspired to or anticipated. There are no financial rewards, no employment security. Neither can they look forward to becoming part of 'the team' in its fullest sense, or assuming the professional identity of a police officer, and all its cultural associations (both internally and externally to the police). What aspects of the police officer identity that are left to them must be squared with an awareness that they are still 'only' volunteers, not permitted to assume the mantle in full. Ahern has stated that '[the] day the recruit walks through the doors of the police academy he leaves society behind to enter a profession that does more than give him a job, it defines who he is' (in Fielding, 1988: 41). Trainee Specials accept a very different kind of elevation on their first day at the academy.

That is not to say that the position of volunteer officer is not viewed as a significant status elevation by those who aspire to it. Far from it. Data will be presented in the following chapters to show how

much pride and reverence trainees associated with their role in the early days of their training. Even attaining the moral superiority on a part-time, volunteer basis was anticipated to confer significant social capital.

2. Anticipatory socialisation and the Special Constabulary

Those individuals who actively attempt to join the Special Constabulary will have formulated their own image or impression of what they think the role is about, which will in turn affect their motivations for wanting to undertake it. This image may be an accurate reflection based on research or familiarisation through other sources. Or it may be an idealised imagining that is much divorced from reality. Either way, it will likely issue from a perception of the police officer role as founded in the work untaken by regular officers, with a greater or lesser appreciation of the how the volunteer aspect conditions the nature of the role. This image may shift as they progress through the recruitment process, or it may coalesce around what they previously understood, or hoped, it to be.

After being aware of the Special Constabulary for many years, I was drawn to the point of actively expressing interest and beginning the application process by a range of contemporaneous situational factors. I had for a long time wanted to explore the role of constable as a possible future career, and through various personal circumstances, found myself at a point where I had time on my hands to invest in a volunteering role. Several colleagues of mine in a previous police staff role had also been or known Specials, and the reflections and impressions I had been exposed to were always positive. In this way, I represented a similar trend to many applicants to the Special Constabulary whose awareness of the role is generated by informal contacts already embedded within the policing landscape. This feature is important because 'it indicates that such informal mechanisms play a significant role in individuals finding out about the opportunities to volunteer (and therefore the sentiment and perception of police volunteering held by those in policing is going to be important in influencing recruitment)' (Britton et al., 2016: 20). Because of this, I was reasonably well informed on what the role would entail. I allowed myself to get excited by the opportunities that would likely be provided to experience the drama and intrigue that I associated

with aspects of the police role, and yet I was also aware of the significant administrative elements that accompany policing procedures, as well as the deferential relation that Specials need to adopt to their regular colleagues.

The recruitment processes that Specials undergo are broadly similar to those that regular applicants must submit to, comprising of several sequential stages. However, there exists very little standardisation across England and Wales as to how Specials recruitment campaigns and processes are run (Britton et al., 2017). Most forces utilise a combination of stages, including familiarisation events, application packs, on-line assessments, interviews, and assessment centres, but the combination of these is locally contingent. I will now consider my experiences of undertaking aspects of this process in the force under study, Westshire Constabulary, because they reveal how an image of the role was reinforced at various stages that was not representative of my subsequent experiences of it.

Setting a scene

At the time of my recruitment, I was initially required to attend an introductory session in person in order to collect an application pack, which had to be booked onto several weeks in advance. Already the process was testing application and commitment levels among prospective trainees. The Senior Special in charge of coordinating recruitment for the area addressed the attendees with a mixture of welcoming and wariness throughout the hour-long event.[10] His tone hovered between encouragement and dissuading, as if to say 'this is great, but it's tough. Are you sure it's for you……?'

The session began with a standardised run through of the history of Specialing in Westford (and Westshire more generally), an overview of the recruitment process, the training programme, and then some basic FAQs bolstered by a few tentative concerns from the floor. This was followed by a video presented to attendees which began with a sequence of graphic CCTV images from Westford

[10] When I refer to Senior Specials in this thesis, I mean those who have been designated a rank within the hierarchy of the Special Constabulary, such as Special Sergeant or Special Inspector. Such a position gives them managerial responsibility of over aspects of the volunteering experience. Elsewhere they will also be referred to as Special Supervisors.

city centre showing local instances of violence against the person at its most spontaneous and shocking. It finished with a piece of CCTV footage depicting a scene of mass disorder outside a city centre nightclub, including one individual being brutally kicked to the face as he lay on the floor. The senior Special narrated the footage throughout. 'Ask yourself, could you deal with that something like that?' he posed in a sombre tone. 'You never know what you might get called to.'

The telling choice of stills and footage framed police work as purportedly centred around violence and its containment. Not that the video showed officers intervening at any point! Policing was reduced to the implied confrontation of violence and the public were reduced to violent aggressors or unsuspecting and helpless victims. The addition of Queen's 'We will rock you' as background music to these scenes of interpersonal violence was also a strange and yet revealing choice. On the one hand, it trivialised the scenes by reducing their context to one of almost entertainment, and on the other galvanised attendees by suggesting that they could be part of the collective response to such situations.

I suggest that the application of the footage in this way was misleading on two fronts. Firstly, such instances of mass disorder, at least in Westford (the main town in Westshire), were very rare in my experience. The senior Special suggested that we wouldn't be expected to deal with such incidents everyday but left open the likely possibility of its occurrence. Its prominence within the presentation suggested otherwise and provided the enduring visual reminders of the evening. Secondly, the implication that Specials would find themselves dealing with such incidents can also be said to be somewhat deceptive. All the scenes pictured could clearly be placed within the night-time economy setting. And yet, my experiences again revealed that it was far from routine for Specials to volunteer to police such an environment, certainly considering the relative numbers of Specials that were nominally attached to the Westford area. But this did not stop a very clear association being portrayed between policing and confrontation, leaving attendees with a strong and lingering impression as to what this volunteering opportunity would (purportedly) involve.

The session was designed by those who delivered it, and who had taken ownership for the local recruitment of trainee Specials, away from the oversight of the regular constabulary. It was therefore left to them to decide what messages they wanted to convey to their captive audience, what images about themselves and their work they wanted to sustain and perpetuate. Those

individuals initially attracted to the role for its public service and community-orientated aspects would have needed to reconfigure their anticipation and acceptance of what the role might involve to sustain their interests.

After the recruitment event in December, I was given just a two-week deadline to complete a lengthy application form, detailing my qualifications, relevant experiences, and motivations for joining. I then had to wait two months for a space to come available on an evening session to sit a verbal and numerical reasoning test. This evening culminated in half the attendees being filed out one by one and given the news that they had failed, with the successful candidates left waiting in the room until the end of that procession, and then being warmly congratulated, sharing in each other's success on the way out. Before receiving the good news, the successful candidates had discussed their enjoyment of 'ride alongs' with regular officers that they had taken, and discussed a mutual distaste for residential squatters. I left feeling relieved and excited, and it was another two months until I was invited to attend an interview panel to assess my suitability.

Gatekeepers and furthering the image of Specialing

The interview took place in the evening at the same police station. I arrived early in my suit, quickly assessing that no-one else in the front office was in attendance for the same formal purpose as me, basing this primarily on dress and general deportment. Even when only part-way through the selection process, I was already formulating and projecting images of anticipated suitability for the sought-after role. I announced my arrival quietly to the clerk, and took a pew on the row of folding plastic chairs in front of the glass fronted counter. One young lad was there to sign in on bail, and scattered a handful of sweet wrappers under the counter window as he threw back the biro he'd been offered to sign his name in the allocated space. I found myself surprised and annoyed by his petty insubordination and lack of respect; a clear demonstration of where my associations within this world were already taking root. When my allotted time arrived, I climbed the stairs to the top floor with one of the interview panel, a senior Special who collected me from the front office and eventually ushered me into the dedicated room.

The panel of two senior Specials, with several years of experience between them, proceeded to ask me all the standard questions I had foreseen, testing my knowledge of the Specials, and exploring my motivations for joining, nodding heads and turning over highlighted pages of my application form. They soon moved on to some basic situational questions covering public service and minority group awareness. Being keen and prepared, I had sought out a previous colleague in advance who was then a Special, and asked her for the low-down on the interview. She had furnished me with the questions she had been posed, and I had prepared way in excess of what was required. Indeed, as the interview was drawing to a close, I was feeling very confident that my performance would be more than suitable to confirm a place on the subsequent training course, assuming that vetting and medical testing would present no obstacles. The anticipated first round of status elevation was seemingly within reach.

For a final question, I was asked to imagine and describe my response as an officer to a group of unruly youths who were shouting and swearing in the city centre on a busy Friday night. I was advised that a local theatre had just opened its doors, and that families with children were coming out onto the street. Further, I was on my own, and back up was several minutes away if needed. I approached the vagueness of the situation with a relatively vague response, explaining that I would seek to engage with the youths, inviting, perhaps imploring, them to stop swearing, looking to deal with them in a positive but firm manner. The more senior of the two panel members took umbrage at my answer and kept pushing me for a more detailed plan of action. What do you mean 'positively'? What would you do if they ignored you? he queried. How would you respond? When I suggested that the question was hard to answer as I had yet to be trained on what offences the youths had potentially committed or when (and how) it was appropriate to escalate my response, he pressed on, ramping up the aggression and abuse I was facing in the scenario. What do you mean you would 'intervene'? he jabbed, unhappy with my lack of specificity and growing defensiveness.

After several minutes of back and forth, the interview was drawn to an unresolved close and I was invited to wait outside in the corridor whilst the panel discussed my application and interview performance to decide whether I should be supported to attend the initial training course. After ten minutes or so I was called back in, fully expecting a positive appraisal. But I was immediately jolted by the more senior of the pair declaring that they both had serious reservations about whether I would be able to undertake the role. I now felt the onrush of a potential status 'degradation' (Conti,

2006), with the prospect arising that my aspirations would be denied at this crucial stage. My last answer had failed to convince them that I had the appropriate mindset and wherewithal to deal with confrontation. When I countered this, and asked what I should have said instead, I was reminded that I had incapacitant spray and a baton, and should have considered using those if my verbal interactions had not been sufficient. They were about to turn down my application, he continued, but then noted that I was a rugby player (as stated under the 'interests' section in my application form), and so had decided to give me the benefit of the doubt. I was released from the interview with a warning that I would have to convince them that they had made the right decision, offered a stoic handshake, and informed that the admin department would be in touch to arrange a medical in due course.

I left the interview in a strange state, pleased to have been accepted, and very relieved after the voicing of concerns about my suitability. The thought that I had almost been rejected was somewhat dejecting, but the ultimately successful outcome soon displaced this. The medical and security vetting were duly passed in the months that followed, and I elected to bypass a training course that coincided with the summer months in favour of the next one that would start in the following year; over a year after first registering my interest in the scheme.

The experience of my admission into the special constabulary is revealing for several reasons. Firstly, it illustrates the insularity of the selection process, and the internal reserve on conferring membership. Although the guidance at the time of my interview was for a regular officer of the rank of Sergeant or above to sit on the selection panels alongside senior Specials, it was a common occurrence in Westford that the senior Specials would do it themselves, and thus become the sole gatekeepers of the process. This meant that they had an insular grip on who was permitted to join their numbers, based exclusively on their own perceptions of what successful candidates should look like.

Informal conversations with previous senior members of the Specials in Westford relayed that regular officer supervisors were not engaged in the process because the senior Specials in charge of recruiting were either unable to canvass their support and secure their assistance with interviewing, or simply preferred to do it themselves. Relations between the regular ranks and ranking specials were strained where they even existed at all, partly to do with the lack of any formal structures

underpinning working relations between the two sides, and partly to do with the personalities involved. Some of the senior Specials that I encountered lacked the dynamism and practical application of their regular counterparts. Yet this is a point which must be qualified against the fact that senior Specials were still only volunteers, without the training or developmental support available to ranking regulars to assist with successful management practice, or the competition to ensure that positions of supervision and resource management were appropriately allocated (Britton et al., 2018).

Discussing this incident with a regular officer trainer on a later occasion, I was told that my experience of the interview process was worrying for him on several fronts. Not only had they misinterpreted how the final question should be presented, but they provided a worrying suggestion of how it should have been answered. To this trainer, the proposed use of force in the face of verbal abuse was unjustified, and suggested a concerning mindset. Furthermore, the decision to eventually let me through on the basis that I was a rugby player showed a very shallow and concerning approach to candidate assessment.

These observations on my experiences during the stage of entry are very revealing. They show how senior Specials perpetuated the disconnect between the crime-fighting image of policing that they subscribed to and its reality as something very different, in a very similar way to the illusion that regulars attempt to sustain about their work. In chapter two I suggested that this was at once a focal feature of regulars' exaggerated sense of mission, and also a central source of cynicism and frustration. Tuning Special applicants in to the cultural value ascribed to the crime-control ideology (if they don't share it already) may assist them in their ongoing socialisation into the organisation (Chan, 2003). But as I also suggested, the full bounds of the exaggerated sense of mission are not attainable by Specials, who cannot elevate to the same status, and thus the corresponding cynicism cannot be sustained in the same way. Also of interest here, is the point that these two officers were formally socialised, in that they were authorised for solo patrol. And yet they remained at a distance from the regular officer body, many of whom viewed the more senior of the pair especially with extreme wariness and mistrust. Despite their experience and associated rank, they had not been socialised and integrated with the frontline culture.

Counting down to introduction

We have discussed above how anticipatory socialisation is both passively and actively fostered in the individual by the police organisation, with the elongated recruitment process fermenting resilience and building commitment, and with individuals operating within the initial stages of awareness and selection emphasising the benefits of the role, highlighting its supposedly action-orientated aspects, and also elevating the status of the role by suggesting its exclusivity. Specialing was portrayed as not for everyone, a significant undertaking, and one which I especially would need to prove that I had what it takes to succeed in.

Once confirmed on a training course, several active sources of anticipatory socialisation were enacted to sustain and strengthen prospective trainees' commitment to the programme, and the sought-after role at the end of it. One of the most prominent of these was the invitation to join a closed group on a police-administered social networking site. Prospective trainees were encouraged to upload a basic profile onto the platform, and, having joined the designated network groups for our training cohort, to post comments and start conversations with other prospective trainees. Although we had been warned upon invitation about the suitability of the content we might post and share (only the highest standards of professionalism would be accepted from us as prospective police officers, it was affirmed, without any real detail on what this actually proscribed and prescribed) and it was made clear that trainers would be monitoring the forums, there was quite a lot of activity in the months preceding the start date for the course. Topics of conversation mainly included practical matters such as uniform issues, accommodation arrangements, and pre-course reading material, and whilst the chatter was regular from large numbers of the training cohort to come, there were never any controversial moments.

I have referred to prospective trainees in the paragraph above because not everyone who was endorsed to go onto the training programme made it that far. One individual, Quade, was denied the status elevation to trainee at the final hour. In the weeks leading up to the commencement of the course he had been exceptionally vocal on the network site, sharing his exuberant thoughts on everything that was posted by others. On the topic of what boots to purchase prior to the start date,

he proudly declared that he had ordered an extra-special make and design from an on-line retailer.[11] He went into great length to explain the research he had done, and the various features of his impending delivery, which made it so suitable for frontline officers, although at a much greater cost than the model prospective trainees had been advised to purchase. Another one of his favourite topics was interpreting laws that were supposedly being digested and learnt by prospective trainee's in advance of the first weekend's training, offering advice on which ones would be important to learn and which ones could be bypassed.

Unfortunately for Quade, his enthusiasm for the forums was not just noted by the other trainees (many of whom noted his absence on the first day and successfully established that he had been jettisoned), but scrutiny came from the trainers too. Of slight concern/intrigue was Quade's decision to include a link on his network profile to a personal website which he had designed rather crudely. At the top of the page were two smoking guns, and the tagline 'Kicking ass and taking names'. Weaponry featured as common theme throughout his webpage, and, added to his over-zealous engagement with the anticipated status elevation, Quade was evidently deemed unsuitable for the role to come.

Returning to my own anticipatory socialisation experience, another event that stoked my eagerness to begin training was the uniform fitting appointment. Although the session was necessary to get me appropriately kitted out for the start of the course in a few months' time, driving up to the force's headquarters and trying on my impending apparel was very affecting. Looking at myself in the mirror in my black jacket with police emblazoned on the front and back, I felt at once very anxious and very impressed. These new clothes – this uniform – didn't seem to fit at all, both metaphorically and literally. I felt like an imposter, or someone in fancy dress, and I was not sure whether it was hanging correctly. And yet I could envisage a time when it would feel earned, and when it would sit right.[12] Indeed, I was greatly looking forward to putting it all back on again in

[11] Boots were the only item of uniform that trainees were required to supply themselves in the first instance, albeit on the proviso that trainees would be reimbursed for their cost once they reached their destination station at the end of the training school phase.

[12] In actual fact both my trousers and my jacket needed to be resized in due course, after I had initially selected pairs of the former that were too short, and a version of the latter that was impracticably baggy!

advance of the first weekend's training, and having another chance to stand in front of a mirror and take it all in. Coming away from the fitting I was more excited than ever.

Before I summarise this section, a further point on the recruitment process for Specials and its socialising potential should be noted. It was referenced above how the length of regular recruitment can galvanise applicants' commitment to the organisation and foster anticipation of the sought-after role, which is met with much celebration and relief at its eventual attainment (Chan, 2003). However, the same should not necessarily be assumed of Specials. Previous research suggested that lengthy recruitment can negatively affect the enthusiasm levels of those waiting to start training (Mirlees-Black and Byron, 1994). Recent findings confirm this is still the case and further suggest that some applicants 'move on with their lives' because of the slow pace of the process and the 'radio silence' in between stages (Callender et al, 2018b). The longed-for status elevation to volunteer officer does not necessarily hold applicants captive with the same fervour that keeps regular applicants wedded to the prospect of their status elevation.

Taking stock

This thesis intends to focus on the ways in which trainee Specials are socialised to develop competence in their role as volunteer police officers. This chapter's brief engagement with the anticipatory element in that process has sought to highlight how the experience of Specials in this regard is both similar and distinct from that of their regular counterparts. Whilst they undergo a similarly drawn-out, multi-phase process to attain selection onto training programmes, the anticipated status elevation and accompanying rewards from the experience of Specialing represent a much-diluted version of those associated with the regular role. However, this does not dilute the cultural imagery of confrontation and coercion which is propagated by some specials within the recruitment process as a core aspect of the role. The transmission of this imagery feeds into the anticipated profile of those hoping to undergo the training and eventually attain (volunteer) constable status.

Following Conti, a distinction was introduced above between the anticipation to begin training, and the anticipation to become an officer having graduated. It was suggested that those going through

the recruitment phase of applying to join the special constabulary will anticipate each stage, although the main focus of their anticipation will be forecast towards their elevation to officer status at the end of the academy phase. Although most of the available research on police training and socialisation mentions anticipatory socialisation, discussion is usually restricted to the phase before formal training begins. However, this thesis will explore how the currents of anticipatory socialisation are extended through the academy phase, where trainees becomes privy to much greater insight on what their role might involve and are first exposed to elements of the working culture. For where anticipatory socialisation is taken to involve the prospective imagination of the demands of the job, and the rehearsal of anticipated practice (Fielding and Fielding, 1986), this is extended and enhanced by the training school environment.

3. Specialing as anticipatory socialisation

Before concluding this survey of anticipatory socialisation among Specials, it will be important to reference the motivations that applicants bring to the volunteering role, because this will have a significant impact on the way they engage with the training process. Motivations for undertaking paid and unpaid roles are usually divided into *instrumental* and *altruistic* incentives. Instrumental or egoistic motivations refer to the perceived personal benefits of undertaking a role, whereas altruistic motivations focus more on the selfless aspects of the position (Fielding, 1988; Chan, 2003; Hieke, 2017b)). Within the Special Constabulary, examples of the former will involve the perceived challenges and excitement offered by the role, as well as the opportunity for personal development, including, crucially, the ability to enhance one's prospects of successful regular employment. Examples of the latter will include 'giving something back' to the local community or improving police-community relations.

Specials, like regular officers (see Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017), usually present to the application process with a mixture of altruistic and instrumental motivations. However, recent findings have returned that when surveyed (n= approx. 2000) 41% of Specials chose 'interested in a career in policing' as their top-ranked motivation, whilst 9% chose 'interested in policing and wanted to learn

more and be involved'. This was opposed to 19% selecting 'give something back and make local community safer' and 0% stating they were motivated to provide 'a voice/engagement for local community'. In total only 29% revealed top-ranking motivations that were altruistic (Britton et al., 2016). The researchers rightly highlight the 'interesting misfit between the strategic language of many PCCs and forces, which see Specials within an agenda across visibility, local policing and community engagement' and the low levels of volunteers primarily motivated by such factors (Britton et al., 2016: 18).

Some commentators have suggested that Specials are a unique type of volunteer because of the generally instrumental/egoistic reasons with which they seek out the volunteering opportunity (Bullock and Leeney, 2016), with future careers in the police a significantly prominent focus. However, it should also be noted that some forces have previously only recruited from the ranks of the Special Constabulary or PCSOs, such as the Metropolitan Police Service. Other forces have encouraged prospective candidates to the regular service to consider volunteering in times of recruitment freezing, or where they have been unsuccessful at the first attempt (Whittle, 2017). However, some forces, such as Essex Police, have recognised this spread of motivations that trainees bring to the role, and have developed separate volunteer pathways to cater for different motivations (a suggestion first made by Leon (1989) several years ago).

Following on from this recognition that career-orientated motives bring many applicants to the Specialing experience, there is a further level of pre-socialisation that I will introduce here, and which will be explored throughout the remaining chapters. This relates to the further anticipated status elevation of those individuals who: i) are successful at attaining a place at the academy, ii) complete the academy phase and are attested, and crucially iii) aspire to become regular officers one day.

Throughout the remaining chapters, this thesis will pay special heed to those trainees who view their development as Specials as preparation for a further role to come, paying close attention to the ways in which such an orientation feeds into their socialisation within the station environment. The literature on regular officer socialisation suggests that regular recruits undertake preliminary activities to prepare themselves for full-time employment (Chan, 2003), yet the research has not concentrated on the experience of Specialing as a distinctive form of this. It might be hypothesised

that they are likely to be more receptive to the working culture, and more likely to find acceptance within it, given their identification with regular colleagues. Because of this they may be more likely to be exposed to the working rules and operating perspectives of their regular colleagues. This will drive their socialisation experiences in a different direction from those who have no career-orientated interest in the role. This thesis will reveal that whilst such hypotheses are true in part, the picture is much more diverse and complex than this.

Chapter 5

Stage 2: Introduction

A special kind of training course

This chapter will document and explicate the second stage in Van Maanen's socialisation model for police officers, labelled as 'introduction', and which captures the attendance of new recruits at a formal training facility – 'their first real contact with the occupational environment' (1975: 221). As discussed in the previous chapter, the first 'significant transformation' in the learning career of any trainee police officer is from 'civilian to recruit', which begins from the point they are accepted onto the course, and lasts until the first day that they present for their initial training (Chan, 2003: 91). The commencement of this phase thus represents a 'highly significant event' for trainees; 'the crossing of a boundary – from being an outsider to an insider in an organisation they have longed to join' (Chan, 2003: 80). This chapter explores the experience of 'joining' from the perspective of Special Constables, and the corresponding identity as 'insiders' that this allows them to establish.

As detailed in chapter 3, this phase of the research was carried out by way of complete member, covert ethnography. I submitted to the training course as a trainee Special myself, but did not tell anyone that I was conducting a research project. The data presented here comprises my own observations from inside the programme, utilising my reflections and reactions on my experiences, as well as the observations and reflections of those that I studied with, conveyed to me by way of informal conversations and shared insights. Although my voice will carry throughout the ensuing pages, I have sought to enlist those of my trainee colleagues as much as possible, to bring a greater richness to the data, and bring alternate perspectives to the fore.

The first section below sets the scene for the training course, providing some context on the setting of the training and its basic structure. This is followed by a focus on the content of the course, looking at the learning experience that issued from the curriculum. The second and third sections critically approach the trainees and the trainers respectively. Looking first at the volunteer recruits, we will consider some of the demographic features of the cohort, and the group dynamics which

arose. We will then turn to an assessment of the engagement and application shown to the learning experience, with a focus on those elements of the course that peaked the trainees' interests. Turning next to the trainers, we will explore their varying experiences of policing, including the use of experienced Specials as trainers. We will then focus on the ways in which trainers deployed discipline upon the cohort to condition their charges, and the corresponding manner in which this was processed by the volunteer trainees.

The fourth section seeks to problematise the dichotomy between formal and informal sources of learning within the socialisation experience. This is done to highlight that the training school environment should not be considered as the domain of only formal socialisation. Instead, it will be shown that trainees were introduced to the four core elements of the occupational culture in advance of being deployed to their prospective stations. Indeed, I argue that the trainers themselves were responsible for a significant amount of informal socialisation in line with police cultural values. The concluding section reviews the training experience thus far through the conceptual lens developed in chapter two, exploring the relative fulfilment of the three core needs that drive the socialisation process, and which are fed by an engagement with occupational culture.

1. The learning experience

This opening section is intended to add some descriptive and explanatory detail to the academy phase, opening the research site for the reader by providing some context to the experiences that will follow. I will also explicate the combined learning experience that the course was set up to provide. In what follows, I have attempted to summarise its content, and to present some observations on the scheduling of the topic sessions.

Setting

The setting for the initial training course for new Specials Constables was at the force's headquarters, a large campus-like location with various buildings and facilities set within a clearly

delineated and security-enforced boundary on the edge of a provincial town. It was here that the force's most senior officers were based, along with its main administrative hub, and several key departments, such as the police call centre. Within the headquarters site, the force's training school was the established base for most of its regular officer training, including probationer constables, detectives, and various types of specialist operatives. The setting for the training course for Specials in the same facilities was an obvious practical consideration, based on the resources at hand, but it added an air of prestige and formality to the proceedings, suggesting to trainees that we too, like all of the rest of the police organisation, were permitted to begin our journey at such a symbolically important venue.

The training school itself consisted of a lecture theatre, several classrooms, a small library, and a large open plan office all housed within the same structure. Two portacabins provided additional learning spaces, whilst accommodation blocks were situated nearby to facilitate residential courses. The nearby grounds included a sprawling canteen, a gymnasium for personal safety training, a cricket pitch, and several large car parks, all of which provided locations for practical exercises as the training progressed.

Structure

The course took place over 10 weekends, and attendance was necessitated across every day of the course to complete it successfully. Aside from the first two weekends, which ran back to back, trainees attended every fortnight. The day began promptly at 0845 hours and finished at 1700, utilising both the Saturday and Sunday, except for the final weekend where only the Saturday was needed. In total, therefore, 19 days were spent learning how to be police officers, equating to just under four Monday-to-Friday weeks. The basic training course for regular officers within Westshire Constabulary takes place over four months.

The intake for the cohort was 36 officers, with the initial total of 40 depleted by a small number of late withdrawals (including Quade). To ensure an appropriate level of trainee-trainer ratio was achieved, the cohort was split into two groups; Class A and Class B. Sometimes lessons were reversed across the weekend; for instance, Class A would learn about theft offences on Saturday

whilst Class B learnt about public order, and then on Sunday the opposite would occur. Sometimes whole weekends would be devoted to a topic area, and the groups would then swap lessons upon their fortnightly return.

The two classes would come together at the start of each day for a collective briefing, and sometimes at its end, but would otherwise remain mostly separated for their tutorials and learning inputs. Aside from a small number of presentations, the exceptions to this came towards the end of the course when trainees were sometimes pooled together and randomly assigned to undertake various practical exercises in small groups, and also on the final Saturday of the course, where the two classes were amalgamated to learn the basic tactics of public order policing.

A training course for Specials

Before exploring the design and deployment of the training course, it should first be acknowledged that police training frameworks and methods themselves (not just as they are experienced by trainees or delivered by trainers) have also garnered a significant amount of academic attention (see especially White, 2006; Birzer, 2003; Macdonald et al., 1987). This attention is mostly grounded in the assertion that by redesigning training methods and material, policing institutions can impact upon the purportedly negative aspects of their occupational cultures (see Chan, 2003: chapter 1). White asserts that the traditional 'police training method is conceived as a delivery mechanism. Planning begins with what a police officer must know, and proceeds to the design of a methodology to impart it' (2006: 391). At the time that this research was conducted, Specials training across England and Wales had central oversight from the Nation Police Improvement Agency (NPIA), which required forces to implement a 'learning experience' that closely followed that which was required to be delivered to regular trainee officers. This experience was designed to deliver specified knowledge and behaviours, set out against the nation minimum standards expected of successful trainee constables. Objective, competency-based criteria provided the guidelines for assessing such standards, and a range of modules on key topic areas were mandated.

Because there has been no prior analytical focus on the initial training of Special Constables, the extent to which this quasi-vocational learning experience can succeed has yet to be established.

Regular officer training aims to produce proficiency in a specific job role, which is underscored by many sociological and symbolic identity drivers (i.e. joining a profession, receiving a wage and pension, job security, etc.). Because Specials have the same powers as regulars, the position of the NPIA (now branded as the College of Policing – henceforth CoP) was that their training programme should be derived from that of their regular colleagues; i.e. they should cover the same basic material. The problem with this is that the 'specific job role' of the Special Constable is unclear. The general position of forces in England and Wales is that they are there to 'support the police to tackle crime', and whilst they might 'carry out many of the same duties' (Home Office, 2012), they are in reality not bound to the same levels of organisational responsibility or pressure that focus the professional career development of their regular colleagues. Neither is their development pursued with the same levels of expectation or scrutiny as those applied to ensuring regular officer proficiency. Indeed, whilst regular officer training courses are marked by continual assessment and competence-development rating, the Specials training course studied here was 'pass or pass'. Successful completion of the course required only that trainees presented from start to finish (bar any unacceptable conduct issues arising). Although we were warned at the start that we would need to show dedicated application to the learning element, there was no formal assessment at any stage to confer the successful attainment of course objectives.

This discussion has sought to highlight the endemic institutional difficulties that issue from the initial training of volunteer police officers, the impacts that this might have on those devising training courses for them, and on the learning experiences that result. The training course that was delivered in Westshire followed a busy timetable across the ten weekends with a specifically tailored training itinerary. Leading from the guidelines of the CoP, this itinerary encompassed a wide variety of lessons and activities scheduled to introduce trainees to the core skills and crucial points of awareness considered necessary for them to have a sufficient grounding in police powers and procedures.

Sufficiency here is not meant in terms of trainees being fully competent officers when they graduated from the course, but sufficient in terms of them being able to adapt to the working conditions of the live policing environment. Trainee police officers are supposed to have developed the potential to become effective officers during their initial learning courses, but this potential will need to be actualised and enhanced by active deployment. They need an abstract understanding of

their role, a conceptual head start (and a cultural one, to be explored later). But a proper assessment of their operational competence is necessarily differed until they have had the opportunity to deploy and further develop that understanding in the real world. The extent to which this point relates to Special as opposed to their regular colleagues will be considered throughout the rest of this thesis, given the vastly reduced initial training package delivered to trainees in comparison, and considering that no rigorous assessment of that understanding was ever undertaken during initial training.

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes

Although I have no direct data on the theory and planning behind the design of the training course, it is possible to explore the amalgamated content that was delivered to trainees by distilling it into three strands (accepting a large amount of cross over); i) foundational *knowledge*, ii) *skills* attainment, and iii) *attitudinal* development (Chan, 2003: 90 – my italics). This basic schema is a standardised format for approaching the design of learning experiences (such as the training course in question here), irrespective of context or content, with the integration of the three elements the focus of much contemporary analysis on competence development and vocational training (see Baartman and de Bruiijn, 2011).

Looking first at knowledge, the training course attempted to deliver an in-depth awareness on a wide range of topics. One key element of this was the necessary legislative and statutory sections and provisions that would supposedly provide the bedrock of trainee's operational activity. This could be split into three main sections; the law as it relates to offences (such as the Theft Act 1968), the law as it relates to police powers (such as Code G of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, henceforth PACE), and local and national police policy (on such matters as domestic violence and mental health). Alongside this essentially legal grounding, trainees were also schooled on an array of sociological topics and factors, such as the types and corresponding effects of controlled substances, the dynamics of child neglect and domestic violence relationships, and the signs and outcomes of terrorist radicalisation.

With regards to skills attainment, trainees received instruction on a wide range of fundamental physical activities, such as first-responder first aid, personal safety skills, and searching detained persons, etc. Trainees were also instructed in the use of technological equipment, such as radios and computer programmes. There was input on other core operational skills such as the completion of statements and pocket notebook entries, and the interviewing of witnesses. All of these skills relied on aspects of foundational knowledge being properly processed. First aid training required a large amount of information to be internalised, and anything to do with the use of force necessitated an engagement with human rights and relevant legislation. And in terms of the latter skill sets, in order for trainees to be able to write up statements evidencing an arrest, they first needed to be able to understand the distinctive elements required for an offence to be made out – the 'points to prove' - and to recognise these in the behaviour displayed to them (usually with the aid of actors or 'stooges', but sometimes on video). Only then could they think about translating the processes at play into a written format.

With regards to attitudinal development, this area is less easy to assess than the two above, which can be readily identified by specific lesson content. Very few sessions were expressly focussed on this area, although there were some. On the first weekend trainees underwent an afternoon of inputs on prejudice and discrimination, and professional ethics. However, this is not to say that attitudinal development was not a significant element of the learning experience. It was a constant and almost dominant theme that ran throughout the entire training course, in terms of trying to foster a sense of professional identity in trainees, focussed on discipline and public service ideals. In the section on trainers below, I will expand on this last point regarding discipline and identity in detail.

A Special curriculum

Having set out how the interlinked elements of knowledge, skills, and attitudes could be identified in the course content, a superficial review of the course's timetable across the ten weekends suggests that the design of the training sought to mesh these elements together to produce a combined whole, rather than approach them in a designated sequence. As discussed in chapter one, the design of the course was specific to Westshire Constabulary, with other forces taken different

approaches (Britton et al., 2017). For instance, a neighbouring force required trainees to attend for one Wednesday evening session and one weekend day every week for almost six months. However, as mentioned above, NPIA/CoP guidelines required the course convenors to include certain modules and cover basic content, such as a Special Branch input on terrorism and marauding terrorist attacks, and at least one day's practical instruction on first aid.

The first weekend of the course was light on instruction and more focussed towards general induction, but several hours on the Sunday were invested in diversity and 'discipline' training, with a section on how to write in pocket notebooks (PNBs). Weekend two focussed mainly on the law around arresting people, and the practical techniques of searching, although at this stage trainees had no awareness of the kinds of the things they might be arresting people for, or the kinds of things they might be detaining them for to affect a search. The following weekend was heavily loaded with legislation, attempting to cover powers of entry, and the most pertinent theft and criminal damage offences, interspersed with practice sessions on the newly acquired theory. The fourth weekend was focussed on radio use on one day, and first aid on the other. Next was a weekend of learning about basic public order and assault offences, again followed by a practical exercise, with the second day directed entirely to receiving inputs on multiple and varied topics, from drugs awareness to firearms to domestic violence and child safeguarding to mental health. Weekend six was devoted to the theory and practice of road traffic policing, and weekend seven to officer personal safety and the use of police protective equipment (handcuffs, etc). Weekend eight switched between computer-based training on key database systems and more personal safety inputs, followed by a day of learning and practicals on the topic of stop and search. The penultimate weekend began with a lecture on terrorism, and then moved into a general overview of responding to incidents and conducting investigations, with the entire Sunday devoted to 'course consolidation' exercises. Finally, the last weekend (requiring only one day of training) covered public order tactics.

Reviewing the basic structure of the course in terms of content, we can see that knowledge acquisition and skills attainment sat alongside each other throughout the course as it progressed. Learning law and legislation was an almost constant theme from the second to the eighth weekend, whilst practical skills and specific topic awareness were introduced at regular, if seemingly random, intervals. For instance, sessions such as radio usage were positioned towards the start of the course, meaning that trainees had completely forgotten how to use them by the time we undertook our

first shifts, much to our chagrin. And the physical techniques of person searching were taught in advance of learning about the relevant legislation or sociological context of deploying such a power. On the other hand, kernel processes like writing statements and PNB entries were practiced on a number of occasions throughout. Surveying the timetable as a whole, it is hard not to feel that the way in which certain elements were juxtaposed reduced the learning potential by constantly shifting trainees' foci back and forth. A 'highly planned, busy learning schedule' supposedly encourages discipline and conformity in policing students (Wood and Tong, 2008: 301) and may have been part of the rationale between the somewhat frenetic nature of the timetable. However, it has been suggested that such an approach does nothing to encourage officers the 'time and space to develop the necessary levels of self-discipline required of a serving police officer' (Wood and Tong, 2008: 301). In the case of Specials, whose on-going development is left so much to their own accord, it could be argued that fostering this aspect should have been an even greater priority.

It should also be acknowledged that the range of content the course sought to cover was significant, and even then experienced Specials and trainers alike relayed to us that it was only a small percentage of what we would come to engage with across the course of our wider training programme. The fact that the training took place on the weekends would surely have had telling implications on the provision and availability of resources, especially trainers, and so the positioning and scheduling of many of the sessions may well have been dictated by other factors. There was one topic, however, which appeared strategically positioned at the start of the course, and as such, deserves a special mention.

An arresting decision

The decision to foreground the law and procedures of making an arrest at such an early stage in the training was revealing on several levels. As mentioned above, the provisions of section 24 of PACE 1984 were encountered before trainees had any specific knowledge on the kinds of things they might arrest individuals for. Trainees were asked to get to grips with the concept of reasonable suspicion (the objective basis to the thought process that suggests a person may have committed an offence) and the necessity criteria (the objectively-based reasons why the officer believes that arresting is necessary) without being able to properly contextualise this response to an incident with

regard to any particular types of offences. In the lesson the example of a shop lifter was sometimes used, as if this was an easy thing to intuitively grasp without an understanding of the multiple legal aspects of the offence. But then at other stages the trainer used the examples of murder and rape to ground the practice of arresting, which although are intuitively very serious offences, are legally complex, and also infrequently encountered even by regular officers. The session, which lasted all morning, was very taxing for much of the class, and there was significant amount of struggle to process the basics under discussion.

However, the reasoning behind the decision to position this content at such an early stage was revealed by one of the session's trainers when she concluded the morning's learning by explaining that it had laid 'the absolute foundations of our career as Specials'. Arresting was fundamental to policing, we were told, and we must get it right. Although the importance of correctly understanding the processes and implications of arrest is not to be dismissed, it is possible to challenge the notion that the practice is quite so 'foundational' to Special Constables. Those who had been paying attention to the detail of the induction presentation the weekend before would have noticed that Specials in general make very few arrests (650 arrests made over 12 months by approximately 500 Specials). And as encountered in previous chapters, the extent to which modern day policing involves law 'enforcement' has been shown as minimal. The positioning of arresting as such a prominent practice reinforces the cultural imagery of the police as crime-fighters and protectors of the public, but represents a misconception of modern policing agendas. And this applies even more so to Specials, who rarely resort to such a power themselves (Bullock and Leeney, 2016). However, the message was clearly imparted, and the regular returning to the process of arrest throughout the remaining weekends of the course only reinforced this. The trainees left that first session on arrest in a buoyant mode, with several noting that they had enjoyed the topic, even though many had clearly struggled to keep pace.

2. The trainees

This section introduces the reader to the main subjects of the study, and the subsections below intend to answer Fielding's call to bring the 'working group alive' (1989, viii). I will begin by surveying the demographic variables of the cohort, as a way of exploring the variances in the people putting themselves forward to volunteer as police officers, and the relevant experiences they might or might not bring to the role. I will then discuss some of the dynamics that arose amongst trainees, before turning to explore their experiences of the training, and their corresponding levels of engagement in the learning process.

Demographics

Out of the 36 trainees, 23 were male and 13 female, equating almost to a ratio of 2:1. The majority of the female trainees were in their late teens or early twenties, although the oldest member of the group was also female (mid 40s). The male trainees were spread fairly evenly from 18 through to the mid-thirties, with a cluster around the early to mid-twenties. Against the official statistics for the year in question, my cohort displayed a higher than average level of female participation in Special Constabularies across England and Wales (36.1% compared to 30.8%), and a higher proportion of female officers when compared to the national average for female officers in regular constabularies (27.3%) (ONS, 2013). In terms of ethnic diversity, the group was very homogenous, with only two trainees representing a diversion from the white-English heritage of the rest of the cohort, and only one of these trainees being a non-native speaker. Although the constabulary had hoped to utilise the recruitment of Special Constables to increase the ethnic diversity of the organisation around the time of our training, the make-up of our cohort clearly failed to contribute much towards this goal. Bullock (2015) asserts that whilst Special Constabularies are still generally unrepresentative of their local communities, they are sometimes more diverse than their regular counterparts. The percentage of minority ethnic officers in my cohort was 5.5%. Again, for the year in question, the national average for Special Constabularies was 11.0%, compared to 5.0% for regular constabularies (ONS, 2013).

All of the cohort were either in full-time education or employment at the start of our training, with those who worked representing a diverse range of sectors, from jobs in supermarkets, postal work, and tele sales, through to more specialist professions such as accountancy and pharmaceutical consultancy. In terms of academic background, there were a number of university graduates and some current university students, covering a mix of subjects from Law to Engineering. Others were recent school leavers and college graduates, some of whom had studied for a BTEC in Emergency Services. This two-year course offered students a basic grounding in blue light service provision without preparing for a career in one particular service, but was specifically chosen in the cases of my fellow trainees as a platform for ultimately joining the police. The decision to volunteer as a Special was a further calculated step in this regard.

This particular motivation was present in a large portion of the group, and served as a focal reference point. As discussed in the previous chapter, research on the Special Constabulary suggests that the desire to progress into the regular ranks is a commonly asserted instrumental motivation for volunteering to become a police officer (Pepper, 2014; Bullock, 2015; Britton et al., 2016). On our first day at the training school a show of hands was taken for those who wanted to progress to the regular ranks and over half the group extended theirs. Whilst at the training school, the Constabulary announced a recruitment drive for PCs, which many of the trainees applied for, and from which many were rejected at the first phase (an online personality assessment – not required as part of Specials recruitment). It might be thought that the prevalence of such an avowed aspiration would have ensured an accompanying focus and disciplined engagement with the training content for those envisioning a transition to regular officer at some stage in the future. However, as will be explored below, this was not necessarily so.

Groups dynamics

As might be expected in a situation where strangers are thrown together in an intense learning environment (which often necessitated relatively intimate levels of physical interaction such as searching and restraining each other), gender-based associations tended to form very quickly. This was the case in both groups, where the initial weeks saw very strong associations forming, dictating who sat where in lessons and breaks, and who paired with who in role plays and practical scenarios.

As the course continued, class B (my class for most of the course) saw this lessening to some extent, with a more inclusive atmosphere developing. But the same could not be said for class A, who maintained a very rigid gender split until the end of the course. In week 6, upon seeing how the sexes were separated across two lines of seating in the lecture theatre, the oddity of this was remarked upon by a trainer to the class, causing one of the more vocal male trainees to call out 'they don't like us, that's what it is'. This was received with a self-aware laugh from the group, but contained a likely truth.

Although I only spent two weekends training with this class[13], I was able to take its measure, bolstered by the observations of close acquaintance who trained with them for the first half of the course. This class contained a hard core of slightly older male trainees who were outspoken and somewhat bullish in their presentation to others. They dominated interactions in break times and were a vocal presence in lessons and practicals. Their penchant for 'banter' often verged into quite personal attacks on each other and their classmates, and I observed what I perceived to be at best unsupportive and at worst discriminatory behaviour towards a fellow trainee who struggled with language difficulties as a foreign national, and eventually quit the course. They were reprimanded several times for not taking their training seriously, and even accused of bullying through group feedback from the trainers.

This observation is important because of the nature of the role discussed here. Police officers, whether voluntary or regular, occupy a position of significant responsibility, and are also held to account against a strict code of personal and professional standards. Although this training took place prior to the release of the College of Policing's current Code of Ethics, officers were still operating under clearly defined codes of ethical behaviour. The first weekend of our training course finished with a detailed session on discrimination and the ethical requirements of fulfilling the obligations of those sworn into the office of Constable (whether Special or not). The behaviour of those in question not only displayed attitudes and practice often in converse to such values, but it suggested a dismissive stance towards the requirements of the role, and an unawareness of their own behaviour.

[13] I temporarily moved classes to accommodate a sports injury in advance of some physical training sessions and provide an extra fortnight of rehabilitation.

Application and engagement

The above observation is also important because it feeds into a wider assessment of the self-presentation of trainees towards the training course in general, and the subsequent application to the learning experience that they were prepared to make. This training course required a significant commitment, not just in terms of the time it required to be invested in receiving the lessons, but also in the preparation and self-study expected in between the training inputs. From the beginning, the experience of Specialing was set up as a challenging and demanding process, where it was repeatedly conveyed to trainees' that we would need to demonstrate significant commitment. Whilst I invested several hours in the days preceding each training weekend, such an engagement was not the default. Although others showed similar levels of dedication, there was a considerable spread of application, with some trainees admitting they never looked at the pre-reads in the advance of the lessons. These trainees tended to be the younger members of the cohort, and would rarely contribute in class sessions exploring the pre-read material.

For me, the prospect of finding my way as an operational police officer was a daunting one, and I wanted to mine the training course experience for as much of a head start as possible. But others were much more dismissive of the process. Mickey (a student in his late teens) declared during the second weekend of training that he had almost resigned from the course after the first weekend, nonchalantly describing the reading as boring and relaying his dislike for being bossed around by the trainers. Along with several of the younger trainees, he resented the knowledge check tests and the practical exercises because of the effort and application they required, and spent much of his energy hoping for an early finish each day.

Another trainee, Frank (male trainee in his late twenties), made his feelings clear in week two, declaring that he wanted to get out onto the streets for some 'roley-poley' as soon as possible, and that he saw the classroom input as unnecessary. He relayed the following week that he had been called 'mad' and a 'mug' by a family friend who was a serving regular officer, who thought him a fool for volunteering to do a role that he felt had become so devalued in recent years. Frank had previously been turned down for regular officer recruitment, and told to 'get more life experience'. Perhaps because of this, he was very dismissive of those younger trainees he viewed as not taking

their up-coming role, more seriously, even given his own reservations about the requirements of the training course.

However, there was a trend amongst many of the older officers (myself included) to approach the training as required by the trainers, and seize the presented opportunities for learning and development. Trainees such as Roy, a father of two in his late thirties, often acknowledged that fitting in the pre-reading around his full-time job and family life was difficult, given the amount of time he was already sacrificing on the weekends away from his wife and children. But the demands of the course were accepted with a resigned appreciation of the scale of the learning trajectory to come; something that some younger trainees appeared unable, or unwilling, to fully appreciate.

Rites of passage

There were certain course elements that encouraged an enthusiastic engagement from all trainees, however. These were the sessions that involved the familiarisation and utilisation of police officer equipment and the various 'tools of the trade'. The first of these came during weekend four where trainees were introduced to the police radio, an item of operational kit central to the image of the modern-day police officer. Even though this training was undertaken with nervousness and self-consciousness, with trainees initially unsettled by the experience of broadcasting across the open air, the practical exercises offered a chance to experiment using 'callsigns' and requesting information checks, clipping the radios onto ready-made fastenings that had been present on trainees' jackets from day one, but until now had remained dormant. This experience offered an upgrade in terms of skills and imagery, with trainees now able to look and play the part even more than before. At lunch, trainees sat with hushed attention, listening to their respective districts[14] as they ate, excitedly sharing stories of what (they believed – being still unsure of how to decipher all the airwave traffic) was happening at their destination stations. Similarly, when trainees came to engage with road traffic policing during weekends six and seven, the chance to don our brand new

[14] By district I refer to the bounded area within Westshire Constabulary that the trainee has been assigned to. Splitting their geographical boundary into internal districts is a way for forces to manage demand and allocate resources. A district will typically have one main station, sometimes with satellite stations, and have its own radio channel or 'talk group'.

'high vis' overcoats and wander around the training site added a spring to everyone's step, and an applied focus to the demonstrations and practicals that followed.

The most eagerly anticipated session of the training course was the 'PPE' (personal protective equipment) weekend, which resulted in correspondingly high levels of enjoyment and engagement across the entire cohort. From the start of the course, trainers had been stoking interest in the event, relaying that it was routinely rated as the most exciting weekend of the course, and that it would be a challenge to pass. The weekend comprised a range of physical activities centred around the familiarisation of the three main tactical items of operational equipment that officers carry (hand cuffs, batons, and incapacitant spray) as well as a range of 'unarmed defence tactics' for imposing control and subduing violent persons. It was billed as an intense and demanding two days, and I can attest that it certainly was. However, trainee engagement in the learning throughout this weekend was higher than at any other stage, and levels of enthusiasm and enjoyment were closely aligned.

There were many reasons why the weekend held such prominence and offered so many attractions for trainees. The theory session was delivered in a two-hour presentation, meaning the remainder of the weekend was dedicated to practical demonstration and application out of uniform and out of the usual classroom environments. Secondly, the weekend was one of regular physical exertion, with adrenaline pumping and endorphins releasing across the two days, both in the practicals and in the exercises and games used to warm up trainees.

Thirdly, the weekend included two particular sessions that were elevated to almost cult status, because of the demands they would place on trainees and the supposed hardships required to surpass them. Firstly, trainees needed to prepare themselves for the CS exposure session at the end of Saturday during which they would submit to the painful, incapacitating effects of the gas themselves. And secondly, trainees would need to face-off with 'Redman' in a one-on-one fight to round off the weekend ('Redman' being a trainer dressed in a padded suit that could withstand the blows of baton strikes). The regular reference to these experiences by experienced Specials and trainers alike gave them the combined feel of an informal initiation ceremony, requiring suffering and endurance to succeed. Moreover, they were the same tests required of regular officers during their initial training. These two events, contained within the two days of physicality and

confrontation, elevated the training experience across the weekend to something of a 'rite of passage', causing much anxiety in the run up, and then exalt in its successful accomplishment and the status elevation it bestowed (Conti, 2009: 410). During a debrief at the end of the weekend, the trainers declared that they would happily go out on patrol and into a fight with any of the class now that we had all demonstrated an ability to deploy the techniques of control and coercion necessary for survival on the streets. This informal certification of competence further enhanced trainees' sense of fulfilment and belonging.

However, perhaps the most obvious reason behind the weekend's mass appeal to trainees was the attainment of, and acquaintance with, those items of operational kit that are considered so fundamental to the image and identity of the police officer. A constant background theme throughout the course was that life on the streets was a confrontational, sometimes violent affair, where fighting was common, suspects were routinely being arrested, and officers would often need to get 'hands on' with people. During the course of this weekend, trainees received their own symbols of control and coercion in the form of personally issued handcuffs and an extendable baton, as well as getting to wear their utility belts for the first time (beyond standing in front of mirror at home) and stow these items away within it. Whilst the issuing of CS spray was deferred until arrival on district, and the training of its use was conducted with inert cannisters filled with water, trainees were still able to utilise the holsters for the cannisters on their belts, lined up like gunslingers to practice drawing from the hip at stationary and moving targets. The symbolic importance of the weekend's content for their burgeoning sense of identity was not lost on the trainees. During the session on handcuffing, Bob (male trainee in his 30s) turned to me and said 'I feel like a real cop now' upon being given his personal issue pair, weighing the item in his hand and declaring that it was 'a nice bit of kit'.

Exploring this symbolic power, Chan suggests that the police uniform is a visual embodiment of police culture, and that 'wearing the uniform is a key event in the socialisation of student police officers' (2003: 101 - 102). We were issued with uniform on the first morning of the course, and attempting to assemble it correctly became our first task. Over the next few weekends there was much reflection-gazing every time reflective surfaces were passed, stopping to take in the image of the authority we were learning how to handle. However, as Bob's comments neatly relay, it wasn't until the PPE weekend that trainees were able to fully realise the transition we were undertaking.

Chan continues that 'the police uniform and its associated paraphernalia are powerfully symbolic of the essential power of the police – their potential to impose sanctions, to deprive others of their liberty, and to exercise coercive force' (2003: 105). The cultural importance of attaining these paraphernalia was clearly a central component of the cultural value attached to the PPE weekend itself, and this was not lost on trainees. In the remaining days of training, trainees would opt to wear their stab vests and kit belts at every appropriate opportunity. In the static roleplays of the training school environment where the use or receipt of force was not an option, the wearing of full uniform might be thought to offer no practical value. But trainees were by this stage becoming cognisant of the symbolic power of our uniforms, reflecting the objective relations of power over others which we would soon embody (Chan, 2003). In the rehearsing of such encounters, the opportunity to draw on such symbolically important resources for the identity we were trying to assume was keenly undertaken.

3. The trainers

The training of Special Constables was clearly a challenging logistical feat, taking place on weekends sporadically across five months. Perhaps because of this, there was little continuity in terms of who delivered the training sessions, and many different trainers were employed at different stages across the course (in excess of 30 – almost as many as there were trainees!). In the sections below, I will assess the different perspectives from which trainees were addressed, and focus on the atmosphere of discipline that was imposed upon the cohort.

Experiences of policing

Trainers came from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines, and had various experience of teaching and policing. Many were regular police officers who worked full-time or part-time as trainers of regular constables. Those that worked full-time were aligned to training units, either at the training school for new recruits, or at regional centres for the ongoing training and assessment of

probationer Constables. Trainee Specials also received input from trainers who spent some of their contracted time as operational officers, working shifts alongside regular officers, and the rest of it delivering training. In the sections below, I will discuss how the use of 'war stories' and tales from the frontline were a repeat source of reference for trainers, and were routinely utilised as a mechanism for bringing alive and consolidating points of learning, often with an underlying cultural message (such as 'cover your ass'). In particular, those trainers who straddled the divide between operational policing and training often employed such snippets of recent personal experience, or borrowed 'semi-personal anecdotes' (Smith, 1999: 271) from colleagues on their teams at the station. Whereas the full-time trainers tended to have a stock of well-worn stories from their operational days, those who still spent at least some of their working time on duty were naturally furnished with up-to-date observations and insights on life at the station. Whilst maybe not so specific to the points at hand, they often had a freshness and vibrancy which trainees eagerly received; similarly noted by Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce in their research into American police academies (2014). The following example of this occurred during the theory session at the start of the PPE weekend. The two trainers were discussing how to read people's behaviour for signs of fight or flight:

> *When discussing signs of danger, Conklin explains how individuals will go from being red in the face (blood coming to the surface of the skin as they try to bring as much oxygen into their system – accompanied by deep breathing) to white (blood draining away to where it's going to be needed, which will be the limbs). If they're a fighter, he continues, it's going to drain to his arms, but if they prefer flight then it'll go to their legs. He chuckles as he recollects a pertinent story from last week involving both himself and Hightower. They were involved in a car chase across town, he explains, blue-lights flashing, running red lights, etc. [The class listen in eagerly.] The suspect eventually ditched his car and set off on foot and officers followed him for a good while as he tried to sprint away before they jumped out and Hightower eventually collared him. When they got to him he was 'as white as ghost' Conklin relays, because all the blood had gone to his legs. And when they put him in the back seat of the car to take him to the nick he passed out almost straight away, Conklin turning around to see him fast asleep, totally exhausted. The class giggle with amusement at the idea, and Conklin shakes his head with a chuckle.*

Not all trainers were regular officers, however, although this did not necessarily mean they provided much of a contrast or differing perspective on the policing landscape. One of the main trainers who oversaw much of the course had recently returned to the organisation's fold as a civilian employee following 30 years' service as an officer. And during some of the more technical sessions (those covering the use of computer programmes and operational equipment like police radios) trainers were utilised who had never been officers but were specialists in their area. Whereas it could be expected that an ex-officer would present a very similar orientation to serving officers, the orientation of the other civilian trainers was also closely aligned with the value sets and outlook of regular officer culture. For instance, in a session on radio training the trainers felt comfortable utilising an assumed shared sense of humour with trainees in a similar manner to officer trainers, joking about the 'misuse' of force (one trainer parodied the lengthy antenna on a previous radio hand-set and playfully suggested that officers had used it like a baton to strike unruly detainees, where as the current stubby version was best for jabbing in eyes) and suggesting with knowing smiles that trainees had mainly joined up to get involved in fights. Such comments were of course meant in jest, and were received as such, but through the use of such 'banter' they referenced an established familiarity with the organisational culture which these trainers felt comfortable to access and extend to us as cultural apprentices. Similarly, when delivering the training session on the process of inputting intelligence reports, the trainer stated that as officers we should be regularly submitting such reports because of the heightened sense of suspicious awareness it was expected we should develop, and which was fundamental to our success on district. Such a persuasion was often referenced across the course by officer trainers who could personally vouch for this 'sixth sense', but here a civilian trainer was also extolling its virtues without being able to offer the same insider understanding.

Special trainers

Another source of trainers was the Special Constabulary itself. This group was relatively small and contributed to a correspondingly small number of sessions. Some took an active part in the opening weekend, assisting with the general administration and leading an introductory presentation.

Others supported sessions lead by regular officers, although two Specials did train classes for a whole day on first aid.

From a trainee perspective, the presence of Specials as trainers was somewhat conflicting. On the one hand, it was gratefully received to have experienced Specials there to give us a different perspective on our future roles. These experienced Specials told us what life would really be like on district, having lived it themselves. For instance, they could warn us of the need to always complete and keep 'injury on duty' forms ourselves, rather than rely on supervisors to forget to do them, and HR to lose them. They could give us an insight on how some officers were likely to respond to us, and where we would fit in at the station. Their stories and confessional tales demonstrated to us that it was (purportedly) possible to survive, and even succeed, on the streets, regaling us with tales of confrontation and arrests, through to stories of treating casualties and locating dead bodies. Throughout a comprehensive day-long session on first aid delivered very proficiently, these trainers regularly digressed into other areas of the Specialing experience, keen to bestow their collective wisdom. And the trainees responded in kind, directing conversation to a range of concerns, from how to write statements and PNB entries to how to prepare for giving evidence in court.

Yet on the other hand, the presence of the experienced Specials somewhat detracted from trainees' conceptions of themselves, or what they could be. There was something awkward about some of the Special trainers; they did not seem to integrate with the regular trainers in a gratifying or meaningful way. Throughout my sixth weekend, which was focussed on traffic, my class was joined by Copeland, a Specials supervisor with an interest in the area. He sat timidly at the front behind the other trainers, looking uncomfortable and never contributing anything of educational or experiential value. Without being overtly hostile, the other trainers seemed confused by his presence and his input was rarely engaged. Towards the end of the first day whilst he was out of the room, one of the trainers turned to the class and asked us rather sheepishly what Copeland's name was. He didn't know himself, sharing a bemused smile when no-one else was able to provide it. On another occasion, a regular officer trainer offered a dismissive assessment of Special trainers. He opined that we should expect to receive the same standards of training as regular officers, and therefore not be trained by Specials. And at other stages across the course, interactions between regular officers and Special trainers seemed tense, or at least uncomfortable, and this visible friction

became easily transferred to a growing anticipation of how we might experience that relationship ourselves at the station.

This potential source of strain between regulars and Specials was disparaging for those of us who had ambitions of establishing strong bonds with regular officers on district. Sometimes the experienced Specials gave the impression that they were in an exclusive club, linked into and yet estranged from the regular ranks at the same time. From an early stage, I developed a wariness about associating myself too closely with such an outlook, feeding off the reception I could see they sometimes received here at the training school, and the one I could imagine they received on district.

The following extract covers a conversation with Reg (a male trainee in his early thirties) as we shared a lift home together on the second weekend. He also had career interests in the regular force, and an idea of the type of police work he was hoping to experience through Specialing:

> *We are talking about the different roles in the police and where we might end up as Specials and maybe one day regulars, and he says that he first wants to be placed with the response teams, to get some action and chase down the bad guys/get stuck in etc., to get an idea of what that type of policing is like. Ultimately though, he thinks he will be part of a community policing team. I talk to him about my conversation with one of the Special supervisors last week, and relay his comments about Specials at our station being a tight knit squad, doing lots of operations on their own, and how this was put to me as a good thing. I say that I would be wary of signing up to, or identifying heavily with, such a clique, because it would probably be to the detriment of potential relationships with regulars. And that if I wanted to get a full experience of policing then being close to the regulars will be important to this. He agrees on this, and affirms that he wants to try and integrate himself as much as possible too.*

The themes in this extract will carry through into the next two chapters, as I discuss how trainees with similar perspectives attempt to construct an occupational identity that delivers the type(s) of integration they hope for.

Setting the tone

Wood and Tong assess that since 1945 policing organisations in the UK have gradually shifted away from a militaristic style of training 'towards a more reflective, public relations-focussed approach' (2008: 297). This is in contrast to the situation in North America, which is still characterised in many states as highly militarised and bureaucratic (see Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010; Conti, 2009). Still, the 'chain of command' managerial model remains a prevalent feature of policing in England as Wales. Whilst there is a push at present to advance more transformational types of leadership within this system (see Cockcroft, 2014), rank structure and deference to authority are still characteristic features of the policing landscape.

As such, it was unsurprising to find that the training course was presided over by an air of disciplinarianism. On the first morning trainees were informed of the standards of presentation, behaviour, and punctuality expected of them. These criteria were routinely referenced and reinforced throughout the rest of the course. It has been recognised in policing contexts that uniform establishes group identity and membership (Chan, 2003). In this sense, the discipline around uniform standards and presentation that trainers sought to impose on trainees from the very beginning can be viewed as directed to achieve conformity amongst the new recruits and encourage their identification with the wider organisation.

The importance of these aspects was billed as crucial to trainees' future success on district, as well as underpinning the expectations of the public. Trainers often expended several minutes at the start of each day explaining how standards needed to be set at the training school before moving out onto district. The message was imparted that if we didn't get things right at training school we would struggle on district and our supervisors would find us wanting. I remember one day after a weekend of training walking by a male police officer parked up in a car, noting his unkept facial hair, and imagining the grilling I would get if I turned up to training sporting the same. For all the brow beating, my previous experience of working alongside officers, and the orientation visits that I conducted to the stations during my training, gave me the impression that there was an element of performance in the dressing downs we routinely received from trainers (McNulty, 1994).

At this point I will refer to the discussion above which set out to distil the learning experience into three contexts; knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It was suggested that specific learning inputs

focussed on promoting the required attitudes of Special Constables were very minimal, but that this aspect of learning was an undercurrent running throughout the course. The discipline with which several of the training team sought to impose on trainees as a collective was perhaps the focal device for attempting to establish this element of learning. The following extended passage, edited from my field notes, attempts to capture the way in which this was conveyed. These notes cover the end of Sunday on weekend five, when the whole cohort were present in the lecture theatre receiving a debrief on a statement writing exercise. Harris and Proctor were two of the main trainers, both with considerable experience of training new recruits (both Specials and regulars):

When there are no more questions, or comments from the trainers, the session leader explains that Harris wants to have a word with us. He bounds down to the front and positions himself in the middle of the floor. Proctor follows behind and takes a seat to the side. It is immediately obvious from their expressions that they are not happy, especially Harris who is already breathing heavily, and his face is going red. He begins by telling us how disappointed he is to have to come and address us like this on a Sunday afternoon. He says that there a number of issues that have been mounting up which he needs to address immediately, but which he shouldn't have to at this stage in a training course. He says he's never known a training group like it. He runs through a litany of problems which he has compiled. Apparently there have been several reported instances of trainees showing unacceptable cheek and disrespect to the trainers. He says that he has been the victim of it, as has Proctor, who gazes out across the class solemnly. He complains about speeding through the village on route to HQ. He says that he has already warned us about this before, and yet this morning he has a report from a trainer that a trainee was speeding on their way in. 'Uniform', he shouts, 'how many times have I told you not to wear your uniform on your way to training? How many times? And yet you keep doing it.' He is really quite cross, and the trainees sit up and listen warily. Next, he goes on to lambast the inappropriate wear of hair, and the countless warnings he has given people, which they still choose to ignore. Some students are demonstrating an unacceptable attitude in class, he claims, and are not taking the learning seriously enough. He's even had reports from the trainers that some students have been texting and making calls during lessons, he says, shaking his head. And lateness to class, another issue we've been spoken to about which has apparently not sunken in yet. He pauses, surveying the class with steely eyes

and a heaving chest, menacingly tapping his pen on the first row of chairs in front of him. If our behaviour doesn't improve, he warns, he will be writing reports to our districts, and informing our senior officers. 'Professional, friendly and interested' he keeps repeating throughout this rant. This is what we need to be as officers, he says, and it is his job to get us there. And apparently we are not even close yet. Standards of behaviour need to be set now, he warns again.

He asks Proctor whether he agrees and Proctor nods, remaining seated with his leg crossed over the other. 'You can't go around treating people the way you are treating people here' he says. 'If you go out and speak to members of the public the way some of you have been speaking to us they are going to punch you.' I find this inappropriately comic but certainly don't laugh. Proctor and Harris have clearly come in here with the intention of giving us all a shake down, and it's working. Following another hanging pause, Harris dismisses us, saying 'I'll see you all in two weeks.'

Both Fielding (1984) and Conti (2009) have recognised the use of shaming as a socialisation dialectic in the context of regular officer training, where trainers stigmatise 'civilian' traits within a framework of discipline and degradation. Whilst several of our trainers considered it important to establish an atmosphere of compliance and conformity, trainees often experienced this atmosphere as stifling and oppressive. Following the incident recounted above, I recorded the following observations:

The class retreats from the theatre cowed and sullenly. We pool into the foyer and collect our hats from the shelves outside. The general reaction is a mixture of shellshock and depression; the first condition one of surprise at the extent of Harris's attack, and the second a reaction to the telling off, which was quite dispiriting to experience at 16:45 on a Sunday evening, considering that everyone has given up their weekend to come here and train, and is then dismissed on such negative terms. The theme of the weekend from the trainees' point of view has been a mounting resentment at the expectations placed on us to dedicate so much of our time to the training. To end it, after two long and taxing days, with such a comprehensive dressing down is a bit of a slap to the face.

> *As we walk back to our cars dejectedly, a number of people express their grievances at the way we have been treated. One trainee, who was taken aside and spoken to about his attitude earlier on, feels particularly pissed off and threatens to quit if it happens again, completely unfairly as he considers it. One of the girls from my class reveals that some of the other girls were also taken outside and spoken to this afternoon, and that they were decidedly unimpressed as well. One of them was told by a trainer that there is a chain of command that needs to be respected, and which she was evidently considered not to have done. Another trainee says that she doesn't know how they can expect us to engage if all we're doing is sitting in front of a computer screen all afternoon* **[Much of the afternoon's session this day had been delivered through an interactive computer learning platform].** *She feels very unhappy, considering the effort that we are putting in, only to come here in our free time and then be sent away with such a dispiriting bollocking*

Studies of police training in other contexts have shown how some trainees thrive in disciplinarian environments, and that most trainees present to their training courses expecting such treatment (Chan, 2003; Fielding, 1988). But perhaps because trainees had a pressing awareness of their status as volunteers, being routinely subjugated was experienced as unfair and unnecessary. For all the sacrifices we were finding the experience required us to make, such rough treatment at the hands of those we had effectively volunteered to assist felt undue and unwarranted.

Because of the sheer number of trainers who delivered the sessions throughout the course, trainees were generally apprehensive as to how our participation and performance might be received as new trainers were introduced, given the tone set by others. Whereas some took a patient approach to trainees' first floundering steps as officers-to-be, others were much more direct and critical. During weekend three my class completed an afternoon of practical scenarios where trainees were expected to recognise an offence in action and arrest the mock perpetrator. From what I witnessed, the level of application was generally poor, despite several lessons on the topic. However, the two trainers took a reassuring and supportive tone, omitting to focus on obvious and sometimes multiple faults, and instead offering constructive appraisals. The following week it was the turn of the other class to undergo the same sessions with two different trainers. Reg explained that the trainers assigned to his class had taken a completely different approach, being harshly critical to

those whose performance was unsatisfactory, portraying them as almost aggressive and intimidating. This wasn't the case with all trainers, however, and it should be acknowledged there were some whose presence noticeably comforted the cohort, lessening anxiety levels with their open and gregarious nature.

4. Sources of socialisation

This thesis aims to identify and describe the most telling influences that operate on trainees in their early career socialisation as volunteer officers, and the impacts that these have on their learning and development as they seek to establish operational competence. We have already encountered the purported dichotomy between formal and informal sources of influence in the socialisation process. To borrow from Fielding and reiterate this point, 'formal socialisation concerns the planned efforts of the organisation to transform recruits into novice members, while informal socialisation occurs in contacts with existing members.' He continues that the 'prime source of formal socialisation is the training school and the prime source of informal socialisation is the occupational culture of police officers' (Fielding, 1988: 1). Returning to a point made previously by Chan, socialisation into the police requires trainee officers to learn the 'laws, procedures, and techniques of law enforcement and order maintenance', alongside acquiring 'a range of organisational skills, attitudes and assumptions that are compatible with those other members of the occupation' (2003:3). And it is this second set of acquisitions that are heavily influenced by informal sources (Fielding, 1988). I want to disabuse the notion that the training school environment is the source of only (or even mainly) formal socialisation processes, and suggest instead that a huge amount of information is imparted to recruits to acquaint them with the occupational culture – its working assumptions about the world of policing and the corresponding skill sets necessary to survive therein – in advance of them encountering it in the live policing environment (McNulty, 1994; Foster, 2003).

I will start by problematising the contrasted relationship between formal and informal types of learning, and correspondingly the sources that each is supposed to issue from. For instance, formal

learning is said to cover the official way of doing things according to the organisation (Van Maanen, 1975). In the context of police training this could be said to include the requirements of PACE, which sets out the basis for all officer/suspect interactions, and also various national and local policies on a raft of procedures, from how to record crimes to how to provide a minimum standard of service to victim and witnesses. Such learning is based upon legislation or policy documentation which stipulate certain forms of action that are to be enacted in a given situation. Informal learning reveals the way things are actually done in practice, the operational understandings that officers develop on the ground to make sense of their work, and the techniques and tactics that result (Charman, 2017).

The flaw in the dichotomy between the two is that for officers to be able to process and deploy their formal learning, they need to possess a background understanding of what such powers and policies actually mean in context. Certain types of formal learning can only be operationalised through informal sources of information sharing and learning. A good example of this is the concept of reasonable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion is the bedrock of police powers for arrest, and initial detention for stop searches. Officers must be able to evidence objective reasons as to why they suspected the arrested person to have committed an offence, or why they suspected they would find certain specified items on the detained person. However, these provisions as dictated by PACE, say nothing about how to form that suspicion, how to study behaviour and contextualise the elements of a situation, how to study appearances for subtle signs on the surface that the uninitiated might miss, but which the trained eye will be able to reference (McNulty, 1994). Throughout our training we were regularly told that following station deployment that we would start to see the world differently, developing the 'sixth sense' or 'common sense' of policing that would assist us to deploy our powers. Police culture ascribes much prominence to this aspect of the operating ideology, and the notion that acquiring such a capability is inherently wedded to learning on the street (Van Maanen, 1975; Fielding, 1988; Chan, 2003). We would learn to spot the person fiddling with the tags in the corner, or the person concealing items on drawstrings in their tracksuit bottoms. It should be noted that there is much debate about the correct usage of stop search powers for instance, suggesting that the concept of reasonable suspicion is subverted by cultural stereotypes to undermine its supposedly objective basis (see Bowling and Philips, 2007; Bradford and Loader, 2016). However, even granting that such a phenomenon appears to exist in the context

of certain locales and in relation to certain minority groups, it does not negate the fact that a thorough appreciation of how to apply police powers can only come from an understanding of the pressures and contingencies operating on officers depending on the context. And this is not something that PACE, or the Theft Act, or a Home Office directive can offer much help with.

I argue that whilst the training school environment included a great deal of 'by the book' study, involving rote learning of powers, procedures and legal definitions, much of that content could not have been processed unless accompanied by a practical perspective, albeit from the simulated reality of the training school. To properly process the formal learning, trainees needed to understand their future working reality, and this was delivered through informal observations and revelations about the policing world that issued from an occupational cultural perspective (see McNulty, 1994 for recognition of this in an American context). I have discussed above how the learning stream of knowledge acquisition could be differentiated from, but was also interlinked with, skills attainment and attitudinal development. But in and amongst those formal lessons, trainees were constantly absorbing information and receiving wisdom about our roles to come, snippets and insights grounded in the occupational culture. This is because the trainers themselves were not distinct from that culture, albeit they might represent and reformulate some of its cultural tenets differently, depending on their distance to/from operational work. My research suggests that the trainers as a collective closely aligned with many of police culture's foundational aspects, and as such, they were the conduit through which trainees were first exposed to it.

However, it should also be acknowledged that the extension of occupational culture did not only assist the trainees with learning about powers and procedures, and how these might be applied. It also gave valuable insight into the process of becoming both a police officer and a Special, and learning how to fit in with others in the policing environment. As Foster notes, training school offers a 'rehearsal of how occupational culture can nurture and protect its members, where cultural values emanate from the couching of ideas, the examples given, and the style of filling-in talk, back chat and corridor conversation' (2003: 203). As trainees became more comfortable in their new environment, they started to adopt the mannerisms, humour, and talk of more experienced members, learning the rules of interaction and absorbing a growing awareness of the relational dynamics and structures of station life. In the following sections I will reproduce some of the received cultural wisdom bestowed to trainees by the course trainers, utilising the four kernel

elements of police culture encountered in chapter two to summarise the core themes that were transmitted.

An exaggerated sense of mission

This focal aspect of the police officer's working personality highlights the crime-fighting, thief-taking, public-protecting attitude officers may outwardly portray, but which is often undermined by the realities of their work. This self-perpetuating ideology is strongly linked to a superior moral identity which officers associate with their role. Throughout the training course, trainees came to understand that being a police officer is a lifestyle choice, with pressing implications. For instance, we were warned that we would need to stop associating with certain people, and that others might distance themselves from us. And that we would need to hold ourselves accountable to higher standards of behaviour.

The 'mission' that we had chosen to accept was sold to us as consistently challenging, and requiring high levels of personal resilience and determination. People will try to fight us, people will swear at and taunt us, and people will even try to kiss us. And yet it offered the potential for great rewards, such as locating and then reuniting a lost child with his mother. We were advised that the public would place weighty expectations on us, especially those who are the first to arrive on the scene of incidents, and that we would have to show strong levels of commitment to meeting the demands of the role. This was off-set by the self-commending ascertain that by showing dedication to the role of (Special) constable we were demonstrating that we were upstanding members of the community.

We were also advised that the transformation to constable would see us unable to 'switch off', always aware of our surroundings and the necessity to become involved in situations even when 'off duty'. Trainers frequently elaborated on occasions when they had had to assume the mantle of constable, even when out of uniform. The following observation, setting the tone on our first weekend of training, is a good example of this:

> *We discuss the requirements of officers to assist in peacekeeping when they are off duty and the trainer explains that we will always be under a duty to act, unless we are too boozed up*

or are accompanying someone where it would be inappropriate (like pushing a baby in a pram). He relays tales where he has been out with his family and has had to tell them to wait to the side whilst he assists colleagues. 'What are you going to do if you see you colleague getting a shoeing?' he says. 'Are you just going to walk away? No.' Someone asks him whether he switches off when he's out of uniform and he says 'If you ask most coppers, I bet they'll tell you they never switch off. They'll be going down the street with their family eying up this person or that.'

A masculine ethos

Closely linked to the point above, this traditionally cultural persuasion celebrates the action-orientated aspects of policing, especially those that involve confrontation and coercion. This perspective on life at the station was routinely referenced and reinforced. As might have been expected, the PPE weekend was heavily laden with references to violence, both in terms of its direction towards officers, and in terms of officers having to (lawfully) resort to it themselves. But the common reoccurrence of anecdotes about, and references to, 'bundles' and 'bun fights' throughout the other weekends reinforced the impression that the world on district was often turbulent and tempestuous, and that officers needed to be constantly on guard.

A correlation of this was the championing of physical fitness in order to be effective in the role, and although communication skills were often highlighted as fundamental, little time was invested in developing such strategies for handling conflictual or confrontational situations. Indeed, on one occasion, a male trainer was talking about how female officers tend to be better at pacifying aggression in males than their male colleagues. However, the reasoning for this was explained as a reluctance by such subjects to want to fight female officers, as opposed to an acknowledgement that they might be more proficient at handling confrontation without resorting to coercion. This unwillingness to recognise the effectiveness of 'feminine skills' such as effective communication is typical of a police culture derived from male-centric attributes and imagery (Brown, 2007), and demonstrates its enduring resistance to change (Chan, 1996; Loftus, 2010).

The acknowledgement of conflict as a source of job satisfaction was not just implicitly stated, but often directly referenced, leaving trainees under no illusions as to its cultural significance. During the final weekend, a trainer propounded that society was on the brink of crisis, blaming austerity measures and the troubled economic climate, and declaring that public order demonstrations would only become more frequent. He explained that the training would involve some pushing and shoving, and some abuse being sent our way, in order to replicate the types of scenario we would be likely to face. He affirmed that we should enjoy such experiences, that it is 'what policing is about', and that if we didn't find that sort of testing environment fun, that there was 'something wrong with us'. This was all said with a knowing smile, but still relayed an underlying truth.

Us/them

This element of police cultural awareness assists police officers to distance themselves from the rest of society on several levels, notably because of their avowed moral 'mission', and their unique legal authorities. Throughout the training course, trainees were confronted with these oppositional elements of the police officer identity. The collective observations of the trainers revealed what a conflicted position we were going on to hold in this regard.

For instance, trainees were often provided with information on the 'kinds of people' that we would be dealing with, furnished with police culture's sociological and criminological interpretations of the world on district. Without personal experience of interacting with the 'regular customers' we would get to know, stock assumptions laid the initial foundations for working stereotypes that we would take with us into the policing environment. For instance, we were regularly advised of the necessary connection between acquisitive criminals (burglars, shop thieves, etc.) and drug addiction, and the desperate, reckless actions that such individuals would undertake to support their habits. On the other hand, drug dealers were cast as conniving and socially irresponsible, evading detection – even when stopped and searched - and putting their clients lives at risk through the pursuit of profit. Football hooligans and domestic violence perpetrators were constantly couched as sources of hostility and aggression, with their casual acquaintance towards causing serious harm making them hard understand. Such insider information was often presented in oppositional terms, highlighting the disparity between 'us' and 'them':

Tackleberry is talking about the need to protect ourselves from others' suspect personal hygiene. During the general explanations he constantly focusses on drugs suspects, occasionally talking about suspects carrying weapons as well. Drug dealers and users are described as 'not like you, ladies and gents. They don't have the same sense of personal hygiene or know how they ought to look after themselves. They don't think the same way as me and you.' He gives the example of a drug dealer concealing drugs in a kinder egg, popping it into his arse, and then popping it back out again when he needs to sell. He motions how they do it and insinuates how they touch their arses, then the drugs, which then get put into people's mouths, or the money which people handle, etc. He also talks about street drinkers, and the fact that they might not have had a wash for the last year. Do we want to be touching them without gloves on, he poses, and the unanimous answer from the group is no (squeamishly returned from some quarters).

Whilst it was often referenced that members of the public would appreciate our efforts, and that there was considerable satisfaction to have from this, it was also routinely acknowledged that they would hold us to exacting standards of accountability. We were advised that our activities would create intrigue amongst the public, not that they would often be prepared to come and assist us of course. Crowds would gather whenever we attended incidents, and if there were more than four cops together at one time then that suggested a murder had occurred. Because of this, we were often counselled on the importance of 'witness management' when dealing with situations in public, i.e. making sure that our practice and intentions could be conveyed to onlookers, who would hopefully support our interpretation of events, or at least be less able to criticise. For example, when restraining someone we should repeatedly request them to calm down and stop resisting, to demonstrate that we were not restraining them unnecessarily. In the current climate of camera phones and social media, the opportunities for exposure and censure by the public that we had dedicated ourselves to serving was conveyed to us as a source of frustration and wariness regarding outsider intentions.

Certain other groups of people were often set up as generally adverse to the police (law students, drunken revellers), but most notable amongst these were defence lawyers, who were routinely parodied as conniving and manipulative, and overly dedicated to their adversarial stance towards

officers. They were often utilised to highlight how inadequacies in our procedural performance could undermine prosecution cases at court, with the associated moral aspersions often overtly cast over their supposed attempts to undermine honest police work (See McNulty, 1994: 79, for similar treatment in an American context).

Much of the above has focussed on the insularity and negativity of aspects of the organisational culture. But it would be unfair not to highlight how beneficial aspects of police cultural values were also strongly transmitted. Within the us/them element of our informal learning, trainees also came to understand the importance of team work and camaraderie, and how group solidarity as a replicated norm formed an intrinsic support mechanism. From an early stage we were counselled to prevent officers having to deal with potentially dangerous situations alone, whether that be transporting a detained person to custody, or conducting a person search. Similarly, we were assured that hitting the emergency button on our radios to summon urgent assistance would always be met with an enthusiastic, committed response (especially if there was an element of confrontation involved). The value of mutual support and reliance naturally pervaded all the personal safety training delivered, but also formed a background theme to general observations on life at the station. References to the police 'family' were common, and as the course progressed we were increasingly able to assume our fledgling sense of membership.

Cynicism

Regular officer culture is often characterised by an overarching cynicism towards multiple aspects of the police role, founded in frustration that it doesn't match up to the ideals or imagery of officers' self-conceptions. But it is also borne out of regular interactions with the most troubled in society (Loftus, 2010). However, as this training course was intended to develop and motivate volunteers to become operational supports to the regular ranks, this element of police culture was largely kept at a distance from trainees.

That is not to say that the portraits painted of life on district were always overtly positive. Indeed, trainers often exposed trainees to the organisational realities facing frontline police officers to ground our expectations and make us appreciate as much as possible the demands that would be

placed upon us. Trainees were under no illusions as to the types of persons we would be dealing with, and the types of tasks we would be required to undertake. Sometimes we were overtly informed that our place at the bottom of the food chain would mean we would have to do the most thankless tasks, like the strip searching of suspects, or sitting in the cage with a violent detainee when they were being transported to custody.

But such insights did not spook or dissuade trainees, and there was a general sense of acceptance towards whatever else was to come our way. Even when Frank revealed the misgivings of his regular officer contact who called him a 'mug' for volunteering as a police officer, there was little surprise or contemplation on this, and the conversation quickly moved onto regular officer recruitment, with Frank and others all professing their desire to join up one day.

Cultural values and working rules

The above sections have sought to capture and represent the ways in which the communication of cultural values and associated insights by trainers became a focal feature of the academy phase. Far from presenting a sanitised, idealistic model of the police role with strict adherence to legalistic principles, the training school experience was suffused with cultural wisdom and direction to bring alive the sections of statute and the barrage of power-point presentations. Even within the domain of formal learning, informal elements of knowledge transmission and acquisition merged with the 'official' direction provided from the trainers, conveying a validation for working rules on how to interpret legislation to develop and display operational competence.

A good example of this comes from our learning around person searching. Thinking ahead to the live environment, trainees were routinely impressed upon that they could not be too cautious with detained persons and that it was an imperative to always search them following arrest. Confessional cautionary tales from trainers told of bringing suspects into custody only to discover weapons on their person (cue a severe dressing down from the custody sergeant). We were also shown a video early on in the course of just this, and a harrowing physical exchange that followed underneath the passive CCTV camera in which the recently detained male attempted to stab unsuspecting officers within the close confines of the custody booking-in desk.

In our lessons on searching persons, trainees were initially instructed in line with the relevant legislation that in order to search an individual following arrest officers must have reasonable grounds to *believe* they will find either i) further evidence of the offence for which they've been arrested or ii) an item to effect their escape, *or* if they have reasonable grounds to believe the person may present a danger to themselves or others (Section 32, PACE 1984). Because *belief* is a higher threshold than *suspicion*, it requires a greater degree of objectively-based evidence. If a person has been arrested for an offence where there is no outstanding evidence likely to be found on their person, and they are not presenting in a confrontational manner, it may be hard to justify a search.

During a practical exercise in this regard, some trainees were taught a cunning operational trick. To navigate this hurdle and ensure that detainees could always be searched, trainees were advised to consider that most people carry keys and that keys are often used as weapons against the police. Therefore, to search a person in the belief they would have keys, and if so that they *may* present a danger to officers at least, would give officers the semblance of grounds, if they were ever challenged. This was sold to trainees not as a counter-legal tactic, but simply a way of formally grounding an important informal directive. In this way the training school environment reinforced the worth of occupational culture, with its associated working rules and trademark techniques, and even offered ways interpret and assimilate them.

Tales from the field

A recurring theme throughout this chapter has been the use of storytelling. The prevalence of 'war stories' within police environments, and the import they hold in occupational culture generation and maintenance have been routinely recognised by police culture scholars (Shearing and Ericson, 1991; Ford, 2003; Van Hulst, 2013). As Anderson and Muirhead explain, 'policing is a storytelling profession. Storytelling is a linguistic medium for the sharing of experiences, values and culture' (2013: 143). In chapter two, I explored Waddington's take on the importance of the *act* of storytelling (1999). Especially pertinent to the concerns of this thesis, however, some scholars have considered the role of police stories in the socialisation of police recruits, suggesting that war stories are an integral part of the academy experience, providing a 'window into the nature and dynamics of police culture' (Ford, 2003: 101; see also McNulty, 1994). A fuller analysis of war stories as a

learning device and socialisation mechanism will be postponed until the next chapter. However, before doing so, there is one pertinent point to share here, which further evidences the informality of the training school experience.

In his insightful 2003 article, Ford relays that the war stories delivered to trainees in the early stages of their development (academy and first year field training) most often had a manifest purpose of 'teaching street skills', describing 'techniques and strategies physically, socially, or organisationally to control situations' (2003: 93). Ford suggests that the predominate use of such stories can be linked to the fact that the recipients, the trainees, were in the initial stages of their socialisation journey, and so such job-related instructive parables were likely to be of the most use to them as they sought to develop their operational competence. A corollary hypothesis of the above observation is that trainers appear to find the mechanism of storytelling as an appropriate and natural vehicle for extending observations and bestowing wisdom on trainees as a form of 'experiential learning' (Smith, 1999: 88). Already schooled in the art of storytelling from the backstage performances of their own operational experience (Holdaway, 1983; Waddington, 1999), trainers willingly adopt war stories as learning resources. In support of this point, Fielding has previously noted how police academy trainers use stories and anecdotes to 'demonstrate their practical wisdom to recruits, and bring home the value of training' (1988: 90) as well as using them as a 'leaven for generally dry legal input' (1988: 70). And Smith, in his detailed study of storytelling in police training, noted how stories are 'used to facilitate student involvement and to introduce work-place practice into the [classroom] setting' (1999: 308).

Ford's analysis also demonstrated another key finding: that 98% of stories were either supportive (83%) or neutral (15%) towards dominant subcultural norms (2003: 100).[15] I have not completed a similarly detailed codification of the war stories that I recorded, but the prevalence of references to them in my original data is striking. In many cases I was able to recount the story and transcribe its basic features when writing up my fieldnotes. The below extract is a typical example of this. This incident was recounted following a digression from the topic of traffic ticketing to that of off-duty responsibilities. Having clarified with the class that we should always been mindful of our own

[15] Ford utilised Crank's 1998 classification of the kernel tenets of police subculture to ground his analysis. These tenets are strikingly similar to those set out and discussed in chapter two.

safety, and never put ourselves in harms way without access to our PPE, the trainer regaled the class with a story of doing just that:

> *Lassard decides to use a tale of off-duty action to enliven the discussion. He was driving with his wife one day, on the way back from the shops or something, when he spotted a group of aggrieved looking children chasing after a guy who was racing off on a bicycle along the pavement. He put two and two together, thinking 'something's not right here' [comically delivered of course] and decided that the guy on the bicycle had probably nicked it from the kids. He got his wife to drive up alongside the bicycle, and at an opportune moment he opened the door and knocked the guy off the bicycle and into the hedge, thinking as he was doing so that 'I really hope you did nick that bike mate…' (the room erupts in laughter at this stage). He jumped out, and with the help of a helpfully passing friend who he knew from football, he bundled this guy onto the bonnet of his car, and called the police, who took about an hour to arrive [understood by us as an organisationally self-deprecating joke]. It turned out that he was right, the bike was stolen, and the guy was wanted for other things too, and ended up getting sent away for 3 months, which he delivers as though this was a satisfying result. [He is a great entertainer, and the class clearly enjoyed this tale of action, retold in such bumbling fashion].*

In the first thematic review of my data, 'war stories/on-the-job wisdom' was an obvious and routinely utilised conceptual category. And in these stories it is possible to closely align their messages with the streams of received cultural wisdom explored above. Lassard's tale of off-duty exploits helpfully highlights themes of mission (never off-duty), masculinity (crime-fighting, albeit via rather unorthodox means), cynicism (towards the responsiveness of the police organisation), and us/them (capturing a career criminal). The frequency and popularity of stories as a learning resource, and their overwhelming tendency to support occupational cultural perspectives, strengthens the assessment that the training school environment actively engages trainees in the process of informal socialisation.

5. Discussion

The section above has sought to explore how the four core elements of police culture were introduced to trainees during the training course, suggesting that the seeds of informal socialisation were sown from the beginning of their induction into the organisation. Although trainees received considerable direction about how they were required to behave, and the expectations that the organisation had of them, I have argued that they were also exposed to a wealth of information from an operational cultural perspective, as a means of easing their transition between the academy and tutorship phases (McMulty, 1994; Foster, 2003). Much of the above, however, has focussed on the training course as it was delivered. A considered focus is now required on how trainees negotiated and processed the socialisation experiences of their introduction to the policing world. To facilitate this, we will return to the theory of cultural transmission that was set out in chapter two; sociodynamic theory. In the ensuing discussion I will adopt both a retrospective and forward-looking perspective from the end of the training course, reviewing the various states of anxiety and anticipation that trainees were experiencing as their station deployment loomed large.

To recap briefly here, sociodynamic theory recognises three core needs of identity, control, and inclusion that novice members of a group seek to fulfil to enable their successful induction (Schien, 1985; Chan, 2003). Where the needs are met, they generate attachment and bind members to the wider group, but where they are frustrated novice members experience anxiety about their position. Successful socialisation occurs where novice members engage with the cultural resources of the occupational setting to meet those needs, considered in turn below. Of course, the proper realisation of these needs could not occur at the training school, with the role of police officer encountered in the abstract. Cognisance of this focussed anticipation to the longed-for status elevation that could only be revealed through authentic encounters in the live environment.

Identity

The first desire new members seek to fulfil is for inclusion, to find a position within the organisation that offers a role, and specifically, an identity within the group. This need is one that is largely self-assessed, in that individuals need to reflectively feel that they have achieved a sought-after identity,

however that manifests. This contrasts with the third need for security and acceptance, which is mostly assessed in relation to others. Whilst others in the organisation could extend a sense of security to trainees, forming an authentic working identity requires deference to the following phase of the programme.

As trainees we were able to approximate ourselves into the role through the way we dressed and carried ourselves, and even the way we spoke. As trainees became more at ease in our hats and boots, we also became more composed in the persona we were training to adopt. On our last weekend, a new intake of Specials was amassing for their own introduction, and throughout the day we remarked on their comparative awkwardness as they shuffled around the site; similar to us at the start but not anymore. And towards the end of the course, some trainees even felt comfortable enough to address their trainers within the organisation chain of command, utilising informal epithets like 'Sarge' to show their deference, but also their insider self-association.

Regarding some of the specific aspects of identity transformation undertaken by trainees, I have discussed the growing awareness of the symbolic power carried by the uniform, and the linking of coercive equipment to the cultural import of masculinity. The enthusiasm and engagement garnered by the PPE weekend clearly demonstrated this. Coming away from the weekend, I reflected on how my confidence had been boosted by the experience, even if it made me somewhat uneasy about celebrating my capacity for coercion. During the same weekend, another trainee, Eddie (late teens, male), also acknowledged this confidence gain, stating that the unarmed defence techniques that we were taught made him 'feel good' when he was deploying them on others. Although there was still much anxiety at having to face conflict on district, we at least left the training school with a burgeoning identity as crime 'fighters', having passed the rituals of the PPE weekend. Indeed, the regular espousal of this theme throughout the academy phase only served to perpetuate this aspect of our sense of selves.

I have also discussed how the 'mission' of policing was sold to trainees, and that even as volunteers, it was still pressed upon us that we would need to make changes in behaviour to meet the standards expected of us by both the public and the organisation. No distinction was made between the personal transformation required of us and that of regular recruits, endorsing that we could assume an identity as a police officer, albeit a Special one.

However, as much as I experienced excitement about being initiated into the operational fold, I also experienced a degree of foreboding. My interactions with experienced Specials and my observations of how they interacted with regular officers, both at the training school and on orientation visits to my station, made me wary of the reception I could expect if I presented myself in the same way; i.e. as part of the Special constabulary, and not as a regular officer apprentice. To me it seemed obvious that there were barriers to their acceptance, linked to the way they conveyed their identity as Specials. As I prepared myself to make the transition between the two fields of practice, I already had a sense of the type of acceptance I was after, and the orientation to my role that I would need to demonstrate to achieve it. I wanted to be part of the 'us' and not the 'them'. This is a theme I will return to in the subsequent chapters.

Control

The second need covers the desire to master the environment, gaining a degree of control, and influence within the group. This need responds directly to trainees' own sense of developing competence, and feelings of readiness to face the challenges of the operational environment. The extent to which this need was partially fulfilled or not was a correlation of how content trainees felt about their processing of the formal learning, against how much stock they placed on this themselves.

I have explored the mixed application shown across the cohort to the aspects of the course, such as the pre-reading and the willingness to engage in practicals. Whilst some trainees seemed unflustered by their poor performance when given the opportunity to act up, others were much more self-reflective. The following passage recalls a discussion with Grace, a female trainee in her mid-twenties who was generally a committed student. This took place on the final day of the course:

> *After the last exercise we are dismissed to collect our kit and head home. As we walk back to the lecture theatre, I talk to Grace, who is usually very bubbly, but has been rather subdued today. She explains that she has been trying to concentrate really hard because she felt like she did really poorly at the course consolidation exercises last time out. She acknowledges that she was hungover, but she still feels she didn't do well and that has really*

> *knocked her confidence. She says she couldn't remember any of the powers and struggled to remember the offences, and generally just found herself in a muddle. I try to reassure her that she has been really good over the course, and that she will get the hang of it when she gets out there, but I can tell it has left her feeling pretty unsettled.*

Grace was experiencing the type of anxiety that others in the cohort did not convey, perhaps because she had the awareness to recognise her ignorance of practice against the potentially overwhelming complexity of the role to come. Others such as Mickey were able to superficially associate the role with 'driving around and looking cool' [20/8], observing a much more laissez-faire approach to their own proficiency and developing competence towards the end of the course. Frank later revealed that the same officer who had called him a 'mug' for volunteering had also told him to 'forget everything you've learnt' at training school in anticipation of the real learning experience happening on the streets. His application to the course in the latter weeks clearly revealed this shifting focus.

In the next chapter, I will explore the relationship between operational officers and the training school, and the assumptions they held about it. Whilst the literature suggests a dismissive stance from those in the field (Fielding, 1988; Chan, 2003), I did not find this to the extent also professed by Frank's contact. Whilst there was a degree of contempt expressed on district for the dullness of the training school environment, there was no great attempt to reset my learning or superimpose a new approach. Rather, officers at the station offered practical adaptations and explanations for making sense of basic powers and procedures within the live environment, in a similar way to some of the approaches we had been made privy to at training school. Such a re-orientation was already suggested to trainees by trainers whilst still at the training school, planting the notion that we would need to reassemble and revaluate much of what we had already been taught. The working rules of officers of the ground would help us to assimilate ourselves within that new environment.

Acceptance

The final need covers the desire to feel accepted and secure within the group. Although part of the wider organisation whilst at the academy, as trainees we were fully aware that we could not

properly engage with meeting this need until we reached our districts and began to establish a working identity for ourselves. The anticipation of the challenge of integration was the cause of significant anxiety and foreboding. However, the final weeks of the course provided much positive reinforcement for those feeling insecure about the extent of their membership. For instance, during the public order training of our last day's instruction, we were informed that regulars would readily appreciate our assistance on district, and that in the context of mounting civil unrest, the regular constabulary would simply not cope without our support.

The extension of police culture during the academy phase can be of great comfort to trainees anxious about their place at the police family table. In the first instance, the fact that insider information is conveyed to them by experienced members is a sign of acceptance. The sharing of cultural meaning ascribed to the police mission, and the attendant implications for self-actualisation, are endorsements of trainees' fledgling membership status. Similarly, the dissemination of cultural knowledge from the us/them perspective encourages trainees to view the world in oppositional terms, looking out from inside the police organisation. And the masculine ethos that is extended to trainees promotes and confirms a common acknowledgement of those aspects of the role that provide the most cultural gratification. The passing of key initiation events within the PPE weekend, in the same manner required of regulars, and the conferring of approval by trainers, further enhance trainees' self-confidence and feelings of belonging.

Another deeply symbolic event which reinforced this element was the attestation ceremony at the start of the ninth weekend; a ritual occasion imbued with much cultural significance (Conti, 2009; Crank, 2015). Here, trainees recited the constable's 'oath of allegiance' in front of a local magistrate. In return we received our police ID cards, which became the visual representation of our warranted power when housed within a crest-emblazoned leather wallet. The ceremony was conducted with much formality, in front of trainees' friends and family, and included an address from one of the force's most senior officers who declared that we 'were badly needed'. In his own speech, Harris acknowledged his personal satisfaction at overseeing our transformation from 'civilians to police officers'.

Concluding remarks

Training to become a volunteer police officer is a special experience, not least because it expects a considerable amount of commitment and effort, but also because it requires these new members of the organisation to begin to construct a complex occupational identity. Whilst they are asked to assume the standards of behaviour expected from those for whom being a police officer is a way of life, acknowledgement of their volunteer status is always looming in the background. And yet Specialing is not just something to do on the weekend to pass the time. It demands dedication and will require the adoption of operational perspectives that will change the way the trainee looks at the world. It will also change the way the world looks at them when in uniform, and learning to harness its symbolic capital will be crucial.

This chapter has appraised the academy phase for Specials from several angles, considering the demands of submitting to a disciplined regime as a volunteer, and the mixed application with which trainees approached the learning environment. It has also explored the design and content of the learning experience, as well as the way it was delivered by those in charge of 'formally' inducting trainees into the organisation. However, I have demonstrated that the reality is more complex than a dichotomous play-off between formal and informal sources of socialisation as trainees try to make sense of their place within the organisation. The values of the occupational culture permeate the various lessons and sessions undertaken in preparation for their impending deployment. They provide an additional curriculum that trainees must pay close attention to if they are to successfully negotiate the gap between the classroom and the station.

Chapter 6

Stage 3: Encounter
Negotiating the transition from training school to station

The experience of 'going live' is something that every trainee, whether regular or volunteer, must find a way to negotiate once they successfully graduate from training school. This chapter will capture and represent this phenomenon from the perspective of the Special for the first time in the literature, utilising my experiences and those of my fellow trainees to document the reality of transitioning from one field to another, and to propose some analytical schemas for understanding the process.

I have focussed on field data from the very start of phase two of the training programme; the tutorship phase. I have used my first ten shifts as a Special to capture this initial period of encountering police work and attempting to make sense of life inside and outside of the station. This is not an arbitrary number, as these ten outings in uniform covered a range of shifts, which built up to me experiencing a night time economy (NTE) shift.[16] This shift was only attempted once my regular colleagues were happy that I was ready to experience it, having demonstrated enough of a basic awareness over the previous shifts to suggest it was worth/safe exposing me to. Therefore, the shifts that came before it capture an important bedding-in period of adjustment and adaptation. This feature nicely bookends my initial encounter with the policing world and allows for a detailed focus on important early experiences of socialisation.

Whilst my fieldnotes capture a rich picture on this part of the training programme, they do so only from one perspective. Aware of the analytical restrictions of focussing too intensely on my experiences, I have utilised those of my five interview participants as much as possible. Granted, the sample size for this group is small, but the data that issued from almost nine combined hours of

[16] Such a shift involves working from 2200 to 0500 on Friday and Saturday nights in the city centre of Westford, focussing primarily on the policing of pubs, clubs and public spaces. It is a deployment renowned for exposing officers to the more confrontational aspects of the role

semi-structured dialogue is rich and revealing. Coupled with the fact that they remain the only other data sources for exploring the process of becoming a Special during phase two, this chapter will provide extended analysis on this initial segment of the Special's early career development.

As discussed in chapter three, it is accepted that the rest of this thesis may be theoretically weaker for the almost solely auto-ethnographic focus used to explore the subsequent stage of the socialisation journey, given the issues encountered with completing the initial research design and offering alternative voices on the longitudinal process. However, it is contended that this study meaningfully contributes to the literature on Specials training and development. And within that, that this chapter especially advances understanding on a crucial aspect of this field (Whittle, 2014).

It is worth referencing here that the interviews with participants did not map exactly onto my own timeline of development, nor each other's. Whilst three (Nate, Dale, and Terry) had completed approximately 10 shifts by the time I met them (another reason for working to this number within my own data), one (Bob) had completed almost double, whilst the other (Eddie) had completed only half. And those of us who had volunteered for a similar number of shifts, had not reached this number at the same rate. In the analysis below I will refer to these factors where relevant. But it should be noted that trainees presented to the programme with varied aspirations and motivations, and took to the tutorship phase with varied levels of application and commitment. Of course, as volunteers this latter aspect was not always within their control. Therefore, sampling their experiences at a consistent, analogous point within their individual learning trajectories was impossible, in a way that tracking the development of full-time regular officers would be (Chan, 2012). However, what will become apparent in the analysis below is the consistency of experiences that were recounted and the themes that issued from their collated responses.

This chapter will proceed in three main sections. The first section sets the scene for this phase of development, supplying some context on the structure of learning police work in the field for Specials. This includes an in-depth look at the experience of transitioning, exploring how both the trainees and their regular counterparts approached this crucial developmental stage. The second section focusses on the ways in which Specials began to learn about some of the basic aspects of police work. I have suggested three distinct yet related *modes* of learning through which we started to appreciate our surroundings. What becomes evident from these three modes of learning is that

trainees are greatly exposed to the core tenets of frontline culture during their initial encounters, and that early learning experiences are as much about learning the background cultural conditions within which policing operates as they are learning about specific practices and processes. The final section returns to the framework of needs fulfilment in this very different context, exploring how trainees assess their experiences against their need for identity, control, and acceptance, and the perspectives and strategies adopted to achieve them. This section finishes with a concluding discussion on learning experiences during this phase, and the importance of recognising the personal features of the socialisation process.

1. 'Going live' - the tutorship phase

The training programme utilised for Specials in Westshire Constabulary sees those that graduate from the academy phase assigned to stations local to their residences. The preferred format is for the trainee to be assigned to a team of regular 'response' officers to work alongside; uniformed officers who patrol a distinct area or district, answering calls from the public and responding to incidents as they unfold. This is opposed to the Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) who work within those districts but take a long-term, problem-solving perspective toward addressing local community issues.

Within those response teams, the trainee should be assigned to an individual officer who will act as their 'tutor constable'. This format has been generally utilised across England and Wales for many years for the street training of regular trainees (Fielding, 1988; Heslop, 2011; Charman, 2017), and is a model replicated across many international jurisdictions in one form or another, where the role is often referred to as the Field Training Officer (FTO) (Van Maanen, 1975; McCampbell, 1987; Ford, 2003; Chan, 2003; Sun, 2002; Haarr, 2001). As Heslop explains, the 'tutor/recruit relationship provides a classic example of participatory learning similar to that of an apprenticeship, as the novice learns from the experienced practitioner' (2011: 332). In her recent study of regular officer socialisation, Charman (2017) revealed the primacy and significance that new recruits attributed to their tutors in terms of their influence on the recruits' development (2017).

However, whereas tutor constables for regulars are generally experienced officers, who must undergo a specific training package in how to deliver on-the-ground training and support, tutor constables for Specials need not have the same levels of operational experience, nor will they necessarily have received any input on *how* to tutor. And neither can the apprenticeship analogy be applied in the same way, as the volunteer trainee is on a very different social capital standing to the full-time regular officer, where operational expectancies and identities do not align. This is important and telling in several ways. Specials receive a much more truncated, abbreviated, and slender education than their regular counterparts, which is delivered at infrequent intervals, and where formal checks to ensure basic understanding are not utilised. To that end, they are significantly disadvantaged in terms of the regularity and breadth of their learning, and are likely to be significantly less prepared for actual police work. Further to this, their initial competence and capacity for development are not guaranteed. It could therefore be argued that the support and assistance they will require to enable their successful transition is likely to be much higher. Yet those charged to facilitate this process will proceed mostly on instinct and initiative, sometimes with interest, but sometimes without it.

The programme of training requires Specials to work with their tutor to complete a learning portfolio, evidencing basic procedural competencies and skill-sets before being authorised for solo patrol, ending phase two and exiting the training programme. Whereas regular recruits are expected to get through a similar process in 8 to 12 full-time weeks, Specials are encouraged to do so in 12 to 18 part-time months. Whereas regular recruits generally align with their tutor's team and complete a further 18 months of probationary deployment, Specials are effectively able to volunteer wherever and whenever they want, and no longer need to work alongside regular officers. Whilst some teams seek to invest in the Specials assigned to them to strengthen their resilience against absences (sickness levels, annual leave, abstractions, etc.) and develop them as part of the wider team, this is not always the case. Indeed, on an anecdotal level I am aware of cases where Specials have been purportedly signed off by their tutors in under 6 months with the hope that they would no longer choose to work alongside that team.

For the special constable, the task of transitioning is therefore quite formidable, and should not be underestimated (Straine-Francis, 2017). Not only must they adapt a minimal awareness of powers and procedures to a hectic live-time environment, they must do so without the guarantees of

trained tutoring personnel or team structures looking to actively incorporate and develop them. In this sense, the experiences that follow from their initial encounters and the support they receive will be something of a lottery (Whittle, 2012). That is not to say that efforts are not made from within the Special Constabulary to ensure that prospective tutors are suitable and willing to assist, and that supportive provisions from within the Special Constabulary's management structure are not offered. Indeed, before I left training school I had received an in-depth orientation tour of my destination station, and a further tour of the local custody suite, both times meeting several members of the local Specials hierarchy. Efforts were also purportedly made within my station to align tutors with trainees where possible based on personalities. But such attention was not uniform across Westshire, with several trainees within my cohort from other districts still unaware of their specific stations, teams, or tutors until after the training school phase had finished. Similar findings have been previously noted elsewhere (Whittle, 2012).

The tutorship dynamic

To cope with the immense pressure and feelings of over-exposure, police recruits need to find ways of making sense of their new environment. In order to survive, they first have to appreciate the 'rules of game' (Chan, 2003). This chapter documents that initial process of appreciation, of identifying the basic who, what, where's and how's of station life as a Special. The chapter that follows discusses the subsequent importance, and endemic challenges, of being able to put those rules into action and demonstrate this to others (McNulty, 1994). Here I explore the ways in which both the trainee and the tutor approach the initial experiences of transitioning to the 'live-time' environment.

Unsurprisingly, the first few shifts that trainee Specials undertake are heady, anxious experiences, where feelings of unpreparedness permeate their thoughts. These are mixed with feelings of excitement and anticipation as the months of waiting and hours of volunteer investment finally give rise to the longed-for status elevation:

> *'I really enjoy it when I'm on shift, but going to the shift I don't, because I'm like oh shit what's going to happen. Not knowing what's going to happen is the worst bit because you*

like to know what you're getting into, but in the police you don't know until it comes over the radio, and even then it's sceptical' [Eddie]

Tutor constables understand the initial apprehensiveness of suddenly being warranted in public having been through it themselves. Whilst providing some general guidance and direction, those initial shifts are an opportunity to discuss motivations for undertaking the experience, and for the tutor to consider their willingness to induct the new recruit into their inner sanctum. Thus, a hugely important factor within the early experiences of Specials will be their success (or lack of) at establishing rapport with their tutors, and to a lesser extent, their wider team. Beyond finding connections on a personal level, without a basic meeting of expectations around what the tutorship process should involve, and why it is being undertaken, Specials may struggle to obtain meaningful interactions or learning experiences within this new environment:

'If you don't get on with your tutor from the word go you're a bit fucked. Or if your tutor's not that engaged, it's going to be an uphill struggle. Personality as well. But you've got to have that initial engagement, or you're going to find it really difficult. I know people that have moved teams and moved tutors. I'd hate that, not a good way to start. Somewhere where you need to rely on people to that degree, not the situation I'd want to be in.' [Bob]

My peers from the interview cohort had differing experiences in this regard. For instance, Dale was not assigned a specific tutor within his team and was still chasing this after several months, whilst Terry relayed that his tutor had never worked with a Special before and didn't 'really know what to do', suggesting that 'he's a bit cautious with having a new Special maybe'. However, Terry also relayed how the 'first question the regs ask is 'Do you want to be a regular?'' and how answering this in the affirmative was well received. Both Eddie and Nate established productive rapports during their initial encounters, and similarly linked this to their stated desire to do the role full-time one day. And as Bob relayed above, he also managed to establish a very positive relationship with his tutor, although interestingly he achieved this despite holding no plans to go full-time. We will return to this point below when considering how the dynamics of socialisation play out in the context of trainees' needs fulfilment.

Before I proceed to my experiences, a note on confidentiality is required. Although I also underwent a tutorship of sorts, I cannot fully discuss the bounds of this and ensure confidentiality in the subsequent analysis to those that I worked alongside. Critical discussion of my initial encounters with police work requires exploration of some of the penetrating features of police culture. Deconstructing these features lays bare some of the more sensitive aspects of the operating ideology. Tying these observations to specific officers in this analysis, even when anonymised, brings an accompanying level of exposure that I suggest is not ethically fair or warranted. For repeat references to certain relationships would make it clear to those on the ground (and elsewhere within the force) who I was referring to.

However, whilst I spent several shifts patrolling with, and learning from, one officer, I also spent time working with many others, and sometimes patrolled with them for entire shifts. When I did so they too expressed an avowed intention to assist my development. Indeed, some of my most formative learning experiences occurred alongside these officers, and references to these experiences feature heavily in this thesis. Therefore, in this chapter and the next I will decontextualise the focus on the tutorship dynamic within the presentation of my fieldnotes, and instead discuss my learning experiences as if they happened alongside different officers on the team. I suggest this is the only methodological and ethical compromise available. Still, I contend that is does not overly detract from the weight of the analysis, accurately reflecting a facet of my experiences which other participants also encountered, and one that reflected the whole tutorship phase for some (such as Dale).

To add to this section from my perspective, I established connections with regular colleagues by professing my desire to commit to the role of novice constable. Not only did I declare my intention to fully apply myself to the learning, but I also made it clear that I was using the experience to test out whether I had what it took to be a police officer. This proclaimed application was received well, as was my identification with their role. One officer positively affirmed my intention to work regular shifts with the team, explaining how he had been assigned a trainee Special before, but saw him so infrequently that he wasn't able to teach him anything. On a later shift, a colleague explained how regular officers were sceptical of some specials who weren't interesting in becoming regulars, wondering whether they were simply 'power hungry'. The previously existing literature on Specials

often found similar responses when exploring regular officers' perceptions of the motivations of Specials (Leon, 1989; Gill and Mawby, 1990; Gaston and Alexander, 2001).

Informal inductions

Faced with the task of inducting trainees into the live environment, and often without specific training in how this is best achieved, tutors and regular colleagues rely on intuitive means for setting the scenes of life inside and outside of the station. Two devices are put into the action. The first of these is the tour of the 'patch'. Here trainees are acquainted with the physical boundaries of the space in which they will be required to operate, and the culturally important locations within it. Stories about previous police encounters and situated insights on theses places and spaces begin to bring the patch to life (Van Hulst, 2013; Smith, 2014). As Dale relayed, 'They have filled me in on the hotspots, where we have the burglaries, roads where the drug dealers live, and all these other bits and pieces, like if you feel in the mood to give a ticket out this is the place to go sort of thing.' The station itself is of course included within this, with local rules relayed as to which spaces to occupy at which times throughout the shift, where to go for the performance of certain tasks and where to locate specific resources, and when to arrive/leave at the start/end of your tour of duty. But the world outside is extensively covered, with specific attention given to trawling the edges of the district so that the recruit understands the geographic, territorial nature of their role (Holdaway, 1983). For the team on duty has responsibility for everything that happens within that locale during their shift, and this local allegiance is an important part of the operational identity of response officers.

The second of these devices is the setting of expectations, about what the role requires, and what the recruit must do to meet these. These are recounted from the perspective of the regular officer, reflecting on their position, but extending it to that of the part-time volunteer in a similar manner to that seen during the academy phase. Such an extension is a powerful gesture of potential acceptance, allowing the Special to glimpse themselves as a 'proper copper', and not just a volunteer 'hobby bobby' (Leon, 1989). But it is also a daunting challenge, a reminder that regulars and community alike will have weighty expectations. For those officers undertaking the Specialing experience to hopefully enter the regular constabulary, any insight or observation that might assist

them in meeting this challenge will be eagerly digested. The following extract, from one of my early shifts, is a good example of this type of expectation setting. This officer is talking very generally about being a police officer:

> *Douglas offers that there are parts of the job which are upsetting, and that officers get exposed to things that are very hard to take sometimes. He explains that it's a job unlike any other when you consider the range of situations to which officers are required to respond. He says that he's seen his colleagues cry before because of things they've seen. He relays a recent episode in which he and some colleagues had to respond to a suicide, where a student had jumped to their death from a local landmark. He explains how it was a pretty grizzly scene when they arrived. Although as part of their basic training they had been to see an autopsy, he declares that it did little for preparing them for such a sight, contrasting the sterile morgue atmosphere and prone corpses to the scene they were presented with. It affected one of his colleagues badly, he explains sympathetically, having just lost a family member to similar circumstances. They had to take some time away. But officers need to be able to deal with such situations professionally, he affirms. We can't let members of the public see us crying in the patrol car or being sick when there are actions to be taken.*

Forget what they told you?

As we encountered in the previous chapter, even at training school, recruits were aware of the attitude of some regular officers towards the worth and value of time spent learning the 'official' way of doing things at the training school. Some trainees readily digested this perspective and were dismissive of their training, impatient to start the 'real learning' as they saw it (see Heslop, 2011). However, as we also noted in the previous chapter, much of what was conveyed by trainers issued from an occupational cultural perspective, in line with an informal, practical perspective on policing. It was a long way from the by-the-book, irrelevant learning experience that perhaps those officers on the outside assumed it to be.

The tutor constable and others of experience at the station are the most immediate sources of support for assisting recruits with the switch to becoming operational; 'they provide guidance at the

most critical period in recruit careers' (Fielding, 1988: 91). Their advice to new recruits on how to handle the adjustment between the training school and the street will inevitably (and crucially) cover the process of applying and adapting the lessons and lectures attended at headquarters to the infinite variety of street-level situations. A common picture in the literature on police socialisation is summed up by the following paragraph:

> Arriving on the street, the just-trained officer's disquiet will intensify. Realizing during the first few interactions on the street how ill prepared they are, new officers remember [the] admonition, "Once you get on the street, you will need to forget everything you learned at the academy." With the perception of the irrelevance of formal training, informal training takes over during the first weeks of field training. (Ford, 2003:88)

The previous chapter exposed the false dichotomy of casting the training school as the home of formal-only learning, compared with the informally sustained pragmatism and functionality that characterise actual practice. Yet officers at the station can easily undermine whatever learning experiences the recruit has previously undergone, and that recruits themselves may become willing participants in this (Chan, 2003). My early experiences of approaching this issue revealed that worries about an anti-academy culture, at least amongst those officers around me, was not necessarily borne out, although adjustments and reorientations were indeed encouraged. The following extract captures a conversation regarding the differences between these two fields of learning:

> *We are talking about my learning as a new Special, with Kahui professing that he is happy for me to do as much as I want when I work with him, and then we will talk it over afterwards. He says that I am bound to 'fuck up' some stop-searches, that it is to be expected and I shouldn't worry too much if/when I do. He tells me not to worry too much about my 'GOWISELY'[17], and says that I'm going to find doing stop-search on the street a lot different to our practices in training school. He declares that most people won't have the patience for me to go through all the spiel with them, and will just want me to get on with it. However, he affirms that it is important that I introduce myself and that I explain the grounds for*

[17] The training school mnemonic used in lessons on the statutory requirements for person searching. See glossary. Several sessions during the academy phase were spent learning this.

suspicion and the object I'm looking for. It is the bit about the entitlement to a copy of the search form that he is dismissive of, saying that I needn't bother with this. However, he concedes that if I want to do it as we've been taught, then that is fine. He explains that he will show me which corners I can cut, but that I will probably try and cut more. There are certain corners which can't be cut, he affirms, and he'll make sure I know these.

As a way of backing up this point, Kahui relays a tale involving the most recent addition to their team. When he first arrived at the station, he was tutored by one of their colleagues, who one day came back to the station with a funny story. The tutee had identified a notorious local heroin user as the suspect for a stop-search. On approaching the suspect, the tutee began to introduce himself in the proper way but was curtly cut off by the suspect who told him to 'just fucking hurry up and get on with it'. The tutor found this very amusing, as did all the others on the team apparently.

The above passage is interesting for several reasons. The officer is suggesting a cultural approach to the key policing practice of stop and search which does not conform with all of the statutory regulations articulated in PACE, and which were instilled in recruits at training school. However, the reason given for justifying such a position is that those detained for a search prefer such an approach themselves, not that it is more convenient for the officer. The story provided to back this up references a 'regular customer', suggesting that many subjects of stop-searches will be well acquainted with the process themselves, making formal requirements less pressing. This position was reinforced the next time I worked with this officer, when I performed a person search for the first time. A young man had been detained by security staff after been seen to select two bottles of whiskey and place them in his rucksack before attempting to leave the store. We encountered him in the security office. After a recounting of the circumstances from the store staff, and a check on the individual to reveal he was a repeat offender (a regular customer) only very recently released from prison, I initiated a search after being prompted by the officer. The man was subsequently arrested and taken to custody. The following extract captures a debrief conversation held a couple of hours later once the incident had been dealt with.

As we drive back to the station I wonder what Kahui thought about my search, relaying that I felt unsure on approaching him as to exactly what to say GOWISELY-wise, and especially in relation to the power I used. I note that I think it probably would have been a section 1 PACE search, as he hadn't been arrested yet, but admit that I didn't say this to him. Kahui declares that my search was fine. He affirms that searching in cases like this doesn't really necessitate the full GOWISELY approach. The suspect clearly knows what's going on, he explains. They have been detained because of shop theft, and goods have already been recovered from their person. It is enough to say to them, as I did, that I'm searching them to see if they've got anything else on them. They will understand the meaning of this, Kahui proclaims. He confirms that I ought to give the suspect some object and grounds, but suggests that the vague phrase that I used would be enough to cover this. He agrees that it was a section 1 search seeing as he hadn't been arrested yet, but qualifies this, explaining that at the end of the day that we're going to search the person before we bring them in either way. It doesn't really matter which section we quote at them, he suggests. We're still looking for the same things: evidence of an offence(s), and dangerous items. The two sections of PACE cover this between them. He admits that he could have arrested him before I searched him, but it doesn't really matter. [I guess this advice is partly the case because the incident seems so cut and dried – there was clearly enough suspicion to arrest before I searched if he'd wanted to.]

From a procedural perspective, this is back to front, and contrary to PACE. The security staff had already removed the two stolen bottles from his bag, and confirmed this was all that he selected, so was there suspicion on my behalf of other items to find under a section 1 PACE search? Probably not. A more formally appropriate (lawful) approach would have been to arrest him for the offence of theft and then search afterwards using section 32 of PACE, which confers a power to search persons after arrest. But the blurred distinction between the two powers was conveyed as not problematic here because of the relative simplicity of the incident, and the underlying intention to search him as standard prior to transporting him to custody. The debrief continued:

This stance towards searching is qualified in two regards however. The first is that it is important for us to say something before we search, Kahui affirms. We need to consider our

witness management in situations like this, he declares. There were people about down in the office, and it's important to convey to them a professional impression of how we deal with suspects. The second qualification is that situations where the suspect does not know the score (they don't necessarily know a search is coming) require a different approach. We're driving past a woman with her dog, and Kahui declares that if we needed to jump out, stop and search her for any reason that we would have to go through everything with her, including a thorough GOWISELY spiel. In those situations it's important to go by the book, he affirms.

There are several things of note from these lessons on searching, which carry across the topic of how previous learning about formal powers requires further learning on how to adapt to the 'real world'. Referring back to the first piece of advice encountered above, the officer is applying no pressure to conform to his practice, and suggests that the 'proper' way as learnt at training school is acceptable should the trainee feel strongly that they wish to use this. However, the assertion from the officer that *there will be* corners that the trainee will look to cut, even beyond what they are shown by experienced colleagues, suggests an inevitability about adapting classroom inputs to the practicalities of frontline work, and the need to streamline formal processes to fit the needs on the ground. And yet this is coupled with an affirmation that some formal processes in some situations are non-negotiable and need to be followed. Training school lessons need to be closely adhered to sometimes. To the trainee, this direction on contingent corner-cutting complicates one's understanding of how to deploy formal powers because of the context-specific nature of when such an approach is acceptable. In the early days of the tutorship phase it only serves to highlight the trainee's lack of practical understanding, drawing them closer to their tutors and experienced colleagues through additional awareness of their dependency on these individuals for their ongoing survival (Fielding, 1988; Chan, 2003).

The topic of stop and search as a medium for exploring trainees' evolving understanding of formal powers on the ground is extremely apt, as it was referred to by all five interviewees. The following quotations neatly capture some kernel aspects of how trainees processed what they witnessed of the practice, and the processes of socialisation already in operation:

'My tutor has a very abbreviated version of GOWISELY. Not sure how legal it is!' [Terry]

'We get taught the most vigorous ways to do, or the correct procedure to do stop searches and things. But I haven't seen one performed to perfection. They're just done. That's that.' [Nate]

'One guy was a known dealer. He just got pulled for a search, because he was known to the police. We know this chap, let's pull him, and have a quick look. But he didn't have anything on him.' [Dale]

In none of these comments did interviewees offer any condemnation or concern about the use of stop-search as practiced in a manner that ignored statutory requirements and guidance on lawful application, against how they were trained. Instead, such abbreviated and adapted practice was portrayed and accepted as a routine feature of police work. This could be linked to the increasing attachment to regular colleagues that trainees felt as they spent more time in the field, but it is also indicative of how they each reflected on the shift between training school and station by the end of their initial encounter. Within the context of socialisation, these reflections are worthy of detailed discussion, to which I now turn.

Leaving the 'dry ski slope'

Each interviewee was asked to consider how they had adapted to police work over the course of their initial shifts, and how they now perceived their training school experience. Again, all five participants had a very similar stance in this regard.

'What happens in reality is completely different. Training is like an imaginary world compared to out in the car. Cause it all happens so fast…… What you learn in training is nothing like what it's like in real life. They give you best practice, and what in the book it wants you to do, but in reality hardly any of that works.' [Eddie]

'There's no substitute from being out there doing it properly, with people that don't want to be talked to, that you know aren't just going to go back into trainer mode. What I likened it to, which is really stupid, is learning to ski on a dry slope and then going out on snow. You can learn it and be perfectly fine doing it in this environment, but then if you come to the

alternative where theoretically you know everything, then you should be able to do it, but it's completely different.' [Dale]

'Training school is 'this is what you do, this is how you do it' to 'fuuuuuuuck!' It gives you basics, it doesn't give you reality. The reality is like we don't have time for that shit. Until you're doing it, it doesn't mean shit anyway. Until you experience it. Until you get the steer.' [Bob]

'The training centre is 'oh yeah, we're just some friends training' and then you go no, this is serious business, this is police work, this is people's lives, liberties and welfare that we have at stake…… There is something to be said for the street skills. I know we did role plays and exercises, I think the training was very academic, I think I would have benefited from having done a ride along, to see what actually happens, what people actually have to react with.' [Terry]

[On leaving training school] *'I feel like that's when the proper learning sort of began.'* [Nate]

These comments closely echo the consensus of the literature on regular officer training and socialisation, in terms of how recruits reflect on adapting to life in the field (Fielding, 1988; Chan, 2003; Heslop, 2011). The 'unreality' of the training school environment is held in stark relief to the stresses and strains of the live environment, where 'theory' seems to have little practical bearing on street-level situations. It could be suggested that in the case of Specials this phenomenon was always likely to replicated, and even felt to a greater degree, given the vastly reduced content of their training. Interview participants often expressed reservations about the 'academic' nature of the training course, and the amount of learning legislation through lectures and power-points that they had to endure at the expense of developing more grounded skillsets. Several interviewees remarked disparagingly on the lack of practical instruction that was given around how to handle police-citizen encounters in their varied contexts, or the lack of training that was delivered on key practical aspects, such as PPE, using the radio, writing statements, or PNBs. My initial fieldnotes convey a similar position, which is also replicated by the available literature on Specials training (Bullock and Leeney, 2016).

Of immediate interest when reviewing some of these comments in the context of the wider interviews, most trainees had actually *done* very little policing themselves in their initial shifts. The majority of their time was spent observing others, or discussing how and why things were done the way they were. And yet several of them espouse the position that the way they were trained 'doesn't work' or is impractical or irrelevant. The causal factors for such an attitude are likely to be many, and all of great interest to this study. Two suggest themselves initially. The first is that participants were retelling the position they had heard from regular officers on this, or telling a position they assumed those officers to hold. My own experiences of discussing stop-search practice as relayed above suggest that such a perspective was conveyed to some extent by officers at the station, although there was no attempt to undermine formal training. Some of the other advice given by regular officers and the practices they demonstrated to trainees, which some of the participants recalled in interview, suggest that they also presented a similar attitude to trainees around the practical application of certain powers and policies. Referring back to a point acknowledged above, Specials' tutors are not necessarily trained *as tutors*. Therefore, they have not been charged with conveying the 'correct' way to do things on behalf of the organisation to the same extent that the tutors of regulars have. Granted, the literature on regular tutors suggests that they can also be adept at handing down operational shortcuts and assisting with 'training decay' (Chan, 2003). But the extent to which Specials' tutors were cognisant of the need to reinforce the lessons of the training school is likely to be much less.

The second factor is that once trainees were confronted by the full extent of their ill-preparedness, that they looked on their initial training with resentment for not helping to lessen the reality shock, dismissing the content that was provided, and searching for suggestions which they think might have helped (Chan, 2003). This is an entirely natural reaction, given the imposing and disorientating world into which they have just been immersed. But it is no doubt also compounded by the fact that so much of their own, unpaid time had been given up to a training course variously described as 'boring' or 'monotonous', and committing to which caused significant disruption to their working and social lives.

Although this transitional phase caused each recruit some degree of anxiousness and foreboding during their encounter with police work, all five interviewees, much like myself, felt overwhelmingly

positive about their initial experiences in uniform; even Dale, who had not yet been assigned a tutor. All confirmed that the role had exceeded their expectations, whilst giving them an increased respect for the police having now witnessed the work from the inside. These comments from Bob capture the general position well:

> *'I've loved every minute of it, if I'm honest'…'I have to say I don't think I was expecting the level of buzz it gives you. I wasn't expecting half the fun I've had doing it. I was hoping, but I think I've done fucking well to be on the team and stuff'…'I've got every respect for the regulars. I think they do a great job. And that's one thing you learn more than anything else, is how much shit they potentially deal with that you don't see. The fact that they get all this abuse. Got more respect for them than I ever did, because it can be full on, balancing shifts with family life and stuff. Anyone who does it, absolute credit to them.'*

For those interested in a regular career, their initial experiences had been generally affirming in this regard. Asked whether his experiences had made him want to join up even more, Eddie replied 'Yeah I want to do it everyday! It makes it worse. I come out the station and I'm like can go in tomorrow?! But I gotta go to work. That's the nature of the job. That's why you're a volunteer'. However, Terry (who had been turned down for regular recruitment whilst at training school) was more cautious:

> *'I still find it very, very uncomfortable. It's not an easy role to do. You're going into people houses and infringing upon their liberties……..I think it takes a while to settle in. Putting on the uniform helps. I wouldn't do it any other way. But I think it just comes down to experience, this is the role, this is the job, this is how it's done. I certainly will keep trying.'*

2. Modes of learning (culture)

This thesis is about the ways in which Specials develop competence in their role, being ever mindful that the concept is contested in this field, given that expectations about the role profile are unclear at an organisational level and that formal assessments of performance standards are minimally utilised. I have approached the learning/developmental process through the lens of socialisation,

with the occupational culture presented as the repository of value sets and outlooks, and working rules. However, Specials enter a socialisation process in which their direct peers (Specials) are not the custodians or gatekeepers of that culture, and thus where access to social etiquette and practical expertise must be extended by a different kind of actor (regulars).

In this section I will introduce three *modes of learning* about the role of (Special) Constable which characterised the early experiences that I have collated. These modes of learning attempt to capture some processes through which Specials obtain and evaluate information about their role, whether that be practical knowledge about how to approach certain types of incident, or background context on the field of the policing. What will become clear is that each of these three modes provides information for trainees to digest which readily conforms to the basic cultural outlook of frontline officers.

The first of these modes covers the acquisition of knowledge through what I have called a process of *assimilation*, referencing elements of both absorption and integration that can extend from the concept. This incorporates the novice member watching and observing their tutor and others in action, attempting to decipher the cues. Importantly, this mode covers watching and observing 'backstage performances' amongst colleagues within the station, as much as it does observing practical policing on the street.

Secondly, trainees learn through a process of 'receiving wisdom', whereby the tutor and other officers bestow their accumulated knowledge on the trainee. Sometime this knowledge will be explicitly practical, what others have called 'recipe knowledge' (Chan, 2003), and provide step-by-step instructions for getting things done. This knowledge may be conferred whilst a specific process is being experienced or through debrief in its aftermath. But importantly it is also often extended in the abstract without the concrete elements of the situation to hand. However, within this mode of learning trainees are also exposed to the background conditions of their new world, and the accompanying perspectives of their regular colleagues, by receiving wisdom on a range of matters, which whilst not explicitly practical, ground some of the working dynamics of frontline policing.

The third mode of learning is an adjunct of the second, in that information is conveyed on both practical matters and the background conditions of the field. This mode of learning covers the specific mechanism of storytelling, expanding on the previous chapter, and discusses how stories

are utilised on district to convey various forms of information, but also assist trainees to visualise the potential demands of their role, reviewing and rehearsing their own practice in abstract.

i) Assimilation - Observing practice

The most obvious way in which trainees begin to collate information about their surroundings, and learn the rules of interaction, is by observing the behaviour of others (Morrison, 1993; Ford, 2003; Heslop, 2011). The tutor constable, and other team members, provide crucial leads for the trainee in this regard, demonstrating the bounds of the role in action. Strategies for imposing effective control on a vast array of real-life situations are eagerly digested, assuming they can be deciphered. But the trainee also needs to understand what the role means to officers; in terms of how they should present themselves towards it, and how they should view themselves and their colleagues. For the trainee Special working exclusively alongside regular officers, but aware of the disparities in status and social capital that dominate their relations to each other and the wider field, learning by observation and replication is both crucial and inherently problematic.

Within the dynamic of my early learning, because I was able to establish a productive rapport with the officers I worked with, we were also able to establish a pattern of learning that provided me with a sense of security, placating my underlying anxieties, and helping me to settle into the role. This was very much within the remit of 'watch and learn', but with a focus on debriefing and discussion in the aftermath. Throughout our early shifts these officers took a clear lead at the incidents and events we attended, creating space for me to observe their actions on a number of levels; for instance, their delivery and how it changed depending on the subject, their actions, their explanations, their recourse to specific powers, and their general presentation to others. Although I was able to pick up and complete relatively menial tasks by the end of the period under consideration in this chapter, such as recording incidents on police systems, completing statements, making a round of tea for the team, etc. these activities were only attempted after first watching and learning from their approach. And those activities that were more technically challenging, such as handling confrontation or making an arrest, were mostly left to them to action. This pattern was also revealed through the reflections of the interviewee participants.

On my first outing in uniform, I was struck by how nervous I felt at speaking to members of the public, even in uncharged situations. In almost every interaction during the first part of my encounter with the policing world, I watched as others took the lead, directing the dialogue. I took note of the calmness and politeness with which they addressed victims and witnesses of incidents, extending compassion and understanding, but also sensitively managing their expectations. I also noted how they did the same to those who were suspects for offences, including some regular customers. In other situations where we were faced with drunken individuals, I noted how their tone became more direct, and their demeanour more guarded. I also began to note how they managed interactions in terms of the objectives they were trying to achieve, especially in terms of the responses they expected, and the considerations that were at play:

As we drive back towards the station, Slipper spots a car seemingly about to run a red light and then slamming on its breaks in front of us. He idles up behind it and declares that we're definitely going to pull him over, shaking his head. He could well be pissed, Slipper surmises, driving like that in front of a police car. Having been asked to check the glove box, I return that we don't have a breathalyser, but he decides to stop him and have a word anyway.

I get out and follow him to the driver's window. He is quite polite with them, explaining why he's pulled the car over. The driver is very contrite, nodding his head and apologising. His partner leans across from the other side smiling. They appear to be a fairly normal, middle class couple. Before sending them away with good wishes, Slipper reiterates that he was concerned about possible drink driving, but that he can clearly tell the man hasn't been drinking. The man affirms this, nodding his head compliantly. They leave with smiles and waves. We get back in the car and Slipper laughs, relaying that the male tried to blame his manoeuvre on another police car that had sped passed, and supposedly caused the man to divert his path down this street with the red light then taking him by surprise. He proclaims that he doesn't believe that for a second. He relays that the couple had just been to the zoo.

Following a digressive tale about going to a burglar alarm activation at the zoo in the middle of the night some years back, Slipper reflects on the exchange, explaining that they seemed like a decent couple, and that the guy passed the attitude test (by being complaint and

cooperative). If someone doesn't, he declares, if they act up or get balshy with us, then they're definitely going to get a ticket. But those guys were okay.

Although on reflection there were no real grounds to consider issuing a ticket to the driver here, his deferential attitude, perhaps combined with his apparent respectability, were presented as component parts of a positive encounter. Even though the officer wasn't convinced by the driver's excuse for his manner of driving, he was appropriately apologetic and allowed the officer to sufficiently explore his suspicions around the drink driving. This encounter is strikingly similar to one observed by Loftus in her ethnographic fieldwork. She describes the 'attitude test' as an 'informal procedure' for 'maintaining dominance' when interacting with the public (2010: 10). There were no lessons on how to assess deference and exert authority at the training school. Instruction in such informal manoeuvres is the reserve of field-based learning, where ideology meets practice and working rules emerge.

As well as teaching me how to talk to people, experienced colleagues' general presentation to the response officer role provided pointers on requisite attitudes and necessary behaviours. During my first few shifts I was often unaware of the events that were unfolding elsewhere, conveyed to us through our earpieces. Officers displayed an alertness that I was initially slow to master, primed for action if such a call should be issued over the airwaves. I often belatedly observed them dropping out of our conversations as calls for assistance or descriptions of incidents in progress came over the radio, wheeling the car into a blue light run, whilst I nattered away, unaware of what was unfolding. Similarly, when attending incidents with the potential for confrontation they were always wary yet poised, and I gradually learned to follow suit, reading their presentation, and attempting to mimic it.

This orientation to situations of potential confrontation was something other trainees acknowledged, finding clues in the approach of their tutors. Terry, in particular, was highly attuned in this regard, as the following two examples show:

[On looking for a supposed drug dealer on a bike with a sword] '*He's on a bike so we race down to the bike path, that's where I shat my first brick! My tutor grabs his CS, shakes it, and holds it to his chest, out in his hand ready [to deploy], whereas I was naively thinking*

we'd get there and I would go 'stop there Sir' and he would stop so that we could arrest him, and I was just thinking 'actually that's a good idea! I'll take mine out too.'

'Even things like when we walk into a domestic, my tutor will unclip his baton, not take it out, but make sure he's got access to it, just in case. But that's just 10 years' worth of him picking up 'I'm going into someone else's house, they don't want me to be here, this could all kick off'

Reflecting again on my early experiences, as my tutorship phase progressed, I was increasingly exposed to the working practices of the others, not just those I was crewed with. On my sixth and seventh shifts, I attended several incidents along with other members of our team. One of these involved an attempted burglary where the offenders had been interrupted by next door neighbours and then chased by an off-duty officer. One of the team went straight to a local bail hostel and found two sweaty individuals wearing the suspects' described clothing hiding in a kitchen. The incident was a vivid portrayal of how officers constructed rationales for action based on local knowledge and profiles for certain kinds of criminal activity. The two individuals had appeared on an intelligence briefing slide in the days preceding the incident, suggesting that they were currently involved in such types of activity. Although they were not immediate suspects following our initial attendance at the incident, their subsequent arrest reinforced the practical application of the 'rogues gallery' approach to sharing information amongst frontline officers, something which I had initially struggled to relate to the business of everyday policing.

On another occasion I was present with several others when an officer calmly arrested a very irate male from a hospital cubicle. His partner was receiving attention for a broken wrist elsewhere in the department whilst the male was supposedly looking after her son. However, he hadn't paid much attention to the young boy, leaving him alone for several minutes. This lack of supervision, coupled with the male's obnoxious manner, caused hospital staff to request our attendance. The male was arrested for being drunk in charge of a child, and it took several officers to successfully transport him to custody. The arresting officer later reflected on the incident and explained that the offence might not be 'made out' in the end, considering the threshold required to charge it. The male was drunk but maybe not *that* drunk. However, he reasoned that social services would now be involved in the care of the child following the arrest, and the relationship between the male and the mother

would be explored. The officer was sceptical about the woman's claims of sustaining the injury, and suggested domestic violence was a more likely cause. Thus, the act of arresting in this situation was part of a wider safeguarding strategy, as much to combat the male's disorderly behaviour. This was a vivid demonstration of how legal powers could be put into action to achieve objectives that were not concerned (in the main) with the more straight-forward criminal justice ends of investigation and prosecution, within which most of my initial framing of police action had developed.

Observing performance

Whilst observing officers in action, and digesting their subsequent rationales, provides recruits with a great deal of information about how the work of policing is really conducted, a great deal of information is also conveyed by observing the dynamics of what happens inside the station and police cars. Specials learn occupational perspectives not just by being taught how to hone their skills on the street, but also by observing regular officers in their 'backstage' (Goffman, 1959; Holdaway, 1980) performances with each other away from members of the public. As Bacon explains, the backstage refers to 'low visibility…situations in which police officers are able to step out of character, express themselves in an informal manner and act in accordance with their cultural 'ways and means'' (2013: 4).

As discussed in chapter two, the importance of backstage social interaction amongst officers as a formative element of cultural identity and construction has been previously advanced (Holdaway, 1983; Waddington, 1999). The canteen, the changing room, the patrol car or crew bus, and the report writing room are venues for the affirmation of worldviews and the sustaining of key cultural constituents that the work itself does not always support. Trainees must quickly adapt to this very different environment having exited the academy.

In the previous chapter I discussed how the training school environment bestows a significant amount of advance information on life at the station. Yet nothing quite prepares you for the hustle and bustle and jostle of the working environment, with the loudness and brashness of the banter, the constant ringing of telephones and radios, the background wailing of sirens, the steady thump of boots and the constant clinking of body armour and kit belts. Not that I was immediately exposed

to this to a normal extent, with one officer confiding in me during my initial shifts that the wider team were contained within themselves around me to start off with, guarded by a new arrival on the team.[18] But once my presence became a regular occurrence, and I established a profile as an apprentice Special of reasonably sound mind and intentions, my exposure to backstage cultural practice became more extensive.

Trainees must quickly process the difference in presentation and dialogue between inside and outside of the station. Whilst I observed officers generally display a positive, professional persona out on the street, whether interacting with each other or members of the public, the informality of their backstage interactions carried a marked contrast. And it was through these informal interactions and communal storytelling sessions that many social and cultural pointers were implicitly conveyed (Van Hulst, 2013). The following passage is powerful example of such culturally laden interactions. It occurred in the aftermath of the arrest from the hospital discussed above, when all of the officers involved were back at the station, and were joined by the rest of the shift in debriefing the incident.

> *We pull in and head back upstairs with our sandwiches. We munch through them quickly, Douglas eager to go and watch the footage from Carter's camera which he has uploaded, and which everyone is standing around watching and discussing. There is much hilarity at the suspect's suspect language and sheer hostility to the officers present, processed jovially now we're back in the station and he's sleeping in a cell across town. On the video he keeps screaming 'Where's the fucking arresting officer?' and Carter points mock-accusingly to Leonard who is pretending to hide on the other side of some filing cabinets.*
>
> *When it gets to the section where Slipper holds him around the neck there is much amusement, and jokes are made about whether he has displayed an approved home office technique there. Slipper takes the floor and explains to everyone what happened, relaying that as he went around to the other side the male said to him 'If you open that door I'll fucking have you'. 'So of course I opened the door', Slipper proclaims to the others, chuckling about how he told the male to 'get back in the car or it will end badly for you', although he*

[18] Interestingly this had nothing to do with my researcher profile, as at this stage the wider team were mainly unaware of my project, contrary to my assumptions that word would have quickly spread.

was unsure as to what that would actually entail! The video then shows Carter shouting at the male and basically giving him a telling off about his naughty language, and there is much laughter at this.

After we've all watched the video a few times, Slipper takes the video and heads off to the CCTV room to burn copy, anticipating a complaint but confident in his actions and wanting a copy to evidence if ever challenged. I stay in the office by the desk and listen to the others talking about the case. Leonard is laying out the facts of the case to everyone. There is confusion as to whether he was also/should be arrested/will be charged for a public order offence in relation to his rather foul mouth. Whitlock proffers that he doesn't like further arresting and charging for public order offences based on what's happened after arrest because it's natural that they'll be angry and it's us that has effectively set them off. Others listen to this reasoning without offering an opinion either way. Someone asks Leonard whether they'd been drinking and he relays that the girl told him she'd had a glass of wine and a bottle of cider. I add that this was what the male told us he had had too, and Leonard surmises that they'd obviously decided to straighten that one out beforehand then. Someone asks whether he is the Dad, and Leonard explains that he's just the boyfriend, relaying how she described him as 'her rock', saying it in a whiny voice, and following it with 'He buys me chips.' He adds somewhat dismissively that they've only been together for two weeks.

The passage above is loaded with cultural imagery. Of obvious note is the highlighting by officers of the machismo coursing through the incident, including the relatively extreme confrontation faced by the officers at the scene (of which I was a primary target) and the resort to coercive measures to control the subject. The techniques employed by the officers were perhaps unconventional, but necessary, proportionate, and effective all the same, and these aspects were explored and affirmed with both self-deprecation and sincerity. There is also an acknowledgement of collective power in numbers, and the importance of looking after each other. The officer later relayed that he had run around the car and opened the door because of concerns for me as I was sat next to the male in the back of the car at that point, and he was screaming aggressively at me. And there is also a sense of weary cynicism conveyed through the comments of the arresting officer regarding the plight of the

mother, whose relationship with the arrested male is mocked as superficial and reckless. And yet as discussed above, part of the arresting officer's strategy in detaining the male was to consider the safeguarding of the mother and her child. This disparity between the avowed cultural perspective of the officer and the actions that he took in response to the incident, and their motivations, echoes Hoyle's observations on the gap between backstage presentations and policing as often practiced in the field (and especially this sub-field of domestic violence) (1996). For trainees trying to assimilate themselves with regular colleagues inside and outside of the station, recognising and responding to this disparity is a crucial feature of the learning process, and another indication of the complexity of the craftwork that they have volunteered to try and cultivate.

The above event is also revealing as it shows me tentatively engaging with the informal debrief by offering some pertinent information to the discussion. The way in which this information was then incorporated and interpreted by others in line with cultural tropes suggesting how accounts are often fabricated to deceive officers added a further layer to the incident's deconstruction. These type of group discussions were a staple experience where multiple officers had been involved in an incident, or where a smaller number of officers had encountered something worth relaying. And on each occasion there was learning not just on how the practical aspects were accomplished, but on how officers orientated themselves to the work, to each other, and the cultural assumptions in play.

Comments from interview participants also show how they engaged in this type of learning. Whilst the backstage debrief often emerged through the collated experiences of the trainees, it was the humour, or 'banter', that they most readily recognised as an intrinsic feature of station life, and an important one to engage with for those looking to assimilate with the team. The following comments are especially revealing:

> *'You get the banter, they take the piss a bit. You know when they're in their proper banter mode, because you can say what you want. When you're at that point with feeling quite comfortable, then you feel like more part of the team. Like I say, it is cunt this, cunt that. And they're not being worried about you being there.'* [Bob]

> *'It's like in the station, it's like really easy to relax. The banter, you wouldn't say it out on the street. But it's hilarious.'* [Eddie]

> *'The dark sense of humour on the team. It's the first thing I noticed. It's right up my street! I didn't think that would be the case with police officers, but bloody hell, a really dark sense of humour! Even the Inspector is quite bad!'* [Nate]

Nate's case is interesting, as according to his perception, he had achieved a measure of acceptance on his team that other Specials had failed to establish (and even a new probationary regular had failed to establish!). After responding to two sudden death incidents in his first three shifts Nate was nicknamed 'the Grim Reaper'. He attributed his acceptance mainly to his professed desire to join the regulars, and application to the learning experience as a result. In the following passage he elaborates on learning how to speak to members of the public as a police officer, but he also reveals how he had developed a backstage persona also:

> *'You learn to be more careful of the language being used when you're speaking to members of the public in uniform. You go from one minute being sat in a car, swearing, f-ing and blinding, and looking at fit birds or whatever, then the next moment you're dealing with a serious incident. Switching between the two characters.'*

In the following chapter I will explore the use of humour as a socialisation mechanism in more detail, reflecting on how it became a crucial device within my own experience for successfully orientating to the police officer role, both in terms of processing the demands of the position, and initiating meaningful interactions with others. Here it is important to acknowledge the recognition of the 'backstage' aspect by trainees generally, and the links that were made between participation and acceptance.

ii) Receiving wisdom

The section above attempts to capture the opportunities available for learning through direct observation, of both practice and backstage interactions. This section focuses on learning that is undertaken via the delivery of insight and grounded wisdom from experienced officers to the newly initiated. In a similar vein to the steady supply of contextual information on the realities of policing

often conveyed by trainers at the academy, trainees' early shifts were loaded with detailed insider information.

Sometimes the wisdom was explicitly practical, such as how to approach a specific type of situation, or how to handle its consequences. Sometimes this knowledge would be conferred when the situation was at hand, whereas at other times it would be discussed in the abstract, as either part of a de-brief or a pre-brief. All of those interviewed recognised these conversations as a kernel element of their street-based learning.

Within this mode of learning, trainees were also exposed to the background conditions of their new world, and the accompanying perspectives of their regular colleagues, by receiving wisdom on a range of matters, which whilst not explicitly practical, grounded some of the working dynamics of frontline policing. Such wisdom often covers the type of individuals that populate the policing world, both inside and outside of the organisation, and suggests approaches for managing them successfully. Chan refers to this type of wisdom as 'dictionary knowledge' (Chan, 2003).

This study is not an ethnography of the working culture of regular frontline officers, although the richness of the field data could go a long way to sustaining such a project. Instead this is an auto/ethnographic exploration of how Specials attempt to attain competence in their role. Within this it is important to assess the extent to which the cultural perspectives of regular officers are extended to their Special colleagues during their initial development. In a very direct way, the received wisdom handed down to trainees on how to handle the various demands of the role confers strong messages in line with the occupational culture. As a means of demonstrating this a cultural decoding of the collective wisdom conferred to trainees follows. Within each of these sections I will include a summation of some of the cultural tenets espoused by trainees themselves. Doing so helpfully illustrates that not only were trainees being exposed to the working culture, they were learning to replicate operational perspectives as well.

An exaggerated sense of mission (and an accompanying dose of cynicism)

There is much in the literature on anticipatory socialisation that suggests police recruits join with lofty ideals and expectations of excitement and adventure (see Charman, 2017; Chan, 2003). A

similar perspective was often demonstrated by trainees during the academy phase. Although a picture is portrayed for trainees in which the thin blue line is stretched beyond what is reasonable, with most people ignorant of the underbelly of society that cops have to struggle to keep in check, such expectations are partially confirmed in the early shifts by the attitude of regular colleagues, who relay that the rewards of the job come from getting good results for decent people who appreciate police assistance; for instance, by catching burglars. Such a task is what response officers come to work for, with everyone loving a 'break in progress' type scenario, with its promise of action and adrenaline.

But through the declarations that regular officers would much rather be out doing that, or other action-orientated tasks like breaking up fights, as opposed to sitting around on scenes, interviewing shoplifters, or battling an increasing trend of organisational bureaucracy, trainees come to learn that such events are not the norm, and that the desires of the response officer to act out their mission ethic of crime-fighter/social guardian are often frustrated by other more mundane deployments. This picture starts to be confirmed through the contents of shift work and the incidents that trainees are exposed to, although until they have spent more time in the field themselves it is hard for trainees to assess this.

Dale and Terry both picked up on the overriding cynicism of the officers they worked alongside, but also began to show signs of internalising such an outlook themselves. For instance, Dale described the officers on his team as 'really cynical, more so than I expected. Don't believe anything that they see, which is how you've got to be I suppose. You can't take anything at face value particularly'. Terry was more obvious, initially explaining that 'My tutor likes it when I come in, because he vents quite a lot! He has been there for 10 years. Don't know whether he's been jaded by the job, or he's quick to judge, or he just knows the job inside out', followed by the observation that the other members of his team were 'always whinging about the 'clients' and 'if we could only reform welfare' etc.'. During the interview, Terry repeatedly returned to his own frustration that he had only dealt with 'shit jobs……stupid little jobs……really bitty little jobs' (even though I thought he had some really interesting and lively encounters), which he elaborated were mainly domestic or criminal damage incidents where the victims didn't care. He dismissed one incident where a lonely, wheelchair-bound, alcoholic man had been burgled by people he'd initial allowed into his flat as 'a colossal waste of our time', showing little awareness or compassion for the vulnerability of the

victim. What was interesting about Terry is that he had shown no signs of this outlook at training school. Nate also externalised a similarly dismissive position when discussing several domestic incidents that he had been to:

> *'There's not been like a serious beating, man on woman, or woman on man. The main parties involved have usually gone with the threat of the police being called. But they're more like Jeremy Kyle jobs, just utter bullshit. But just because a child might be at the address, you've got to get there and things.'*

Whilst such dismissive attitudes towards victimisation, especially domestic violence, are documented to evolve over time with regular recruits (Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017), their replication in these volunteer trainees within only a few months of operational service is quite striking. Take Eddie's perspective, developed over the course of only five shifts, that 'half the time it's nothing to do with the police, half the time it's a social worker, or a counsellor's work, but because you're in uniform they look at you and assume it's your job sort of thing.' Some of these trainees may well have come to the role with perspectives on certain social issues, and the proper remit of the police in relation to them. But the positions they had adopted after such comparatively little time in the role, and exposure to such situations, suggested that the cultural perspectives of their regular colleagues towards such police work were heady and compelling influences.

Us/them

Linked to the above cornerstones of police culture is the oppositional element of 'us versus them', which undermines the mission ethic of officers by failing to deliver them the gratitude and favour they believe they deserve, and further sustains their cynicism. Whilst getting a result for 'decent people' who appreciate you might be the draw, I was advised that most people are in fact hostile or have little respect for the police, whereas Dale was instructed that 'a lot of people on our patch are very anti, very anti-police. They like to be able to sort their own stuff out. So that's quite a big barrier to get over straight away.' I was also informed that ordinary members of the public are also likely to ask SFQs (stupid fucking questions), and best avoided when trying to process 'admin' away from the station.

A large part of this early education for trainees is to set out rules for understanding the other actors within the policing field. For instance, I soon learnt that every district has its 'regular customers' to whom the workings of the justice system have little significance, and interactions with the police are just a game. Those who won't provide their details to security guards after being detained are bound to be both 'shitbags' and guilty of the offence, whereas those who ask for a specific firm or solicitor upon being booked into custody clearly have familiarity with the process which denotes a criminal past. Drug users will be identifiable by appearance and smell (greasy hair, yellowy skin, and a sweet, sickly kind of BO), and necessarily involved in criminal activity to sustain their habits. Drunk people may be entertaining to encounter initially during the NTE, but officers deal with them in a multitude of situations that they soon become boring and difficult, and a source of vexation. And gang members, even when seriously injured, will never talk to police, preferring instead to settle their scores themselves. In a similar vein, Terry was advised that local travellers' sites were potential places to go to look for suspect cars, whether they be stolen or being used in burglaries. These rough character profiles, extended to recruits often before the subjects of discussion have actually been encountered, offer frames through which Specials can begin to see the world, but also demonstrate how the response officer processes the public that she/he polices by utilising stock experience and categorisations (Skolnik, 1966; Chan, 2003).

The trainee is also passed important information to process on the 'us' as well as the 'them'. Learning about the police family, and its expectation of its members, is another key lesson delivered early on, with the central themes of support and solidarity running throughout. For instance, I observed how officers across all the teams in a station will expect that the patrol cars will be kept stocked and serviced by all who use them, so that no-one is ever left short on the streets. And as Eddie relayed, 'officers will go mental if there's no fuel in the car!' I was also instructed in several other underlying rules of action. For instance, that when aware of risk that others are encountering, officers should share whatever information they can to assist their colleague's assessment of danger. As will be discussed below on the concept of danger and masculinity, calls for assistance from others, especially in confrontational situations, will always be met with immediate action, cementing the collective approach. And bonding opportunities, such as 'refs' (refreshments) breaks, should be recognised as important, for regrouping as a team through the sharing stories and experiences from the shift. Conversely, officers who leak information which has the potential to

negatively impact the force show contempt for the police family. Bob articulated this learning well when reflecting on two colleagues who had let a man run off after applying handcuffs to only one wrist, prompting a mass search:

> *'It's the support piece. We'll all gonna deal with it, not just saying 'you fucked up, you deal with it'. At the end of the day, we're all still doing it together. I think there is a difference, you feel a difference. You know, I've got work colleagues that I've got great relationships with, but I do think you'll build a different bond doing this, because you're all in the shit together, and you genuinely need their back up at some point*.'

Interestingly, a significant feature of the lessons about 'us' extended through regular officers' observations and insights reveals another level of 'us/them' that further isolates the response officer, but this time from much of the wider policing organisation (Loftus, 2010), and not just supervisors as previosly documented (Van Maanen, 1975; Brough et al., 2016). For instance, I was advised that CID officers are lazy and bossy, teaching experienced response officers to 'suck eggs' and demanding large measures of grunt work. Similarly, firearms officers and those on specialist operational teams will often leave response officers to pick up the tedious aspects of their activities, leading to tension and resentment. Bosses and bureaucrats from HQ will make decisions that affect the frontlines without ever consulting officers on the ground, trying to 're-invent the wheel' but only slowing officers down. And even in the same station there can sometimes be conflict between different response teams who cross over on handover, regarding the sharing of work and the promptness of relieving colleagues from their duties. Similarly, Terry and Eddie picked up from their tutors about the problems of working for ineffective sergeants, whereas Nate learnt about the motivational levels of NPT colleagues: 'Spent officers, that's what my team call beat officers. Or just bodies. They go there to retire.' Such information offers advanced notice of where conflicts might lie within the organisation, and where sources of frustration may stem from. But it also serves to drive home the message that your immediate colleagues are the only ones you can really rely on, and thus that you need to reciprocate if called upon. And yet, as a Special, your position within this is not so obvious. In the next chapter I will explain how the inter-organisational aspect of us/them also extends to the relationship between the Specials and regulars.

Through their interviews trainees not only recounted the wisdom that had been bestowed upon them about the 'us' and the 'them', but also readily revealed their own attitudes towards the people they encountered whilst in uniform. Here Terry openly reflects on how policing had changed his perception of a part of town he had lived in his whole life:

> *'I had very rose tinted……but only through my naivety. This place in an absolute shit hole, and now I'm in the middle of it. Most of the people don't work, all on benefits. My perceptions of the area were wrong. It has opened my eyes completely.'*

Bob too, had developed strong opinions on some of the people he policed, closely linked to the attachment he felt to his colleagues, and the potential risks of the role as he now understood them:

> *'My tutor's wife* **[also a PC]** *had a needle stick injury. You should be able to take blood from the other person so you can let the officer know [regarding the risk of infection], rather than them waiting 6 months to find out. Fuck the person that's on heroin or whatever.'*

Eddie, reflecting his attitude to members of the public after his five shifts, offered the following observation, 'As soon as a police car turns up, everyone's out, wanting to know what's going on. And you're like, go away, it's nothing to do with you', which was backed up by Nate's assessment that 'People are real nosey'. And turning again to his new-found perspective on 'people' in general, as opposed to officers, Terry relayed another recently developed bugbear:

> *'When we're going on code 1s to places, I can't stand how people drive! We've got sirens and lights going, you need to move, but they've not noticed us. I'm like 'how have you not noticed us?! Get out the way!'*

After a comparatively short amount of time in the field (in some cases very short), trainees were openly vocalising perspectives on the people that they encountered which strongly adhered to the oppositional elements of police culture. Dismissively referring to certain groups of individuals, or specific persons that they had come into contact with, by utilising stock policing epithets such as 'shitbags', 'scroats', 'criminals', 'old biddies', or describing them as 'skanky' 'shifty', 'dodgy' or 'tricky', trainees revealed a willingness to accept and replicate existing outlooks on the subjects of police work.

A masculine ethos

Like the information received by Specials within the two sections above, the outlook of response officers towards the more confrontational and dramatic elements of their work as extended to recruits is in keeping with the traditional profile of street cop culture. In the following chapter I will discuss how demonstrating an awareness of how to orientate oneself to danger and uncertainty is a key identifier of operational and cultural competence within the socialisation process (McNulty, 1994). Here I will relate some of the received wisdom on the topic as passed down, allowing trainees to consider situations in the abstract and conferring specific 'recipes' for action when handling confrontation (Chan, 2003). Of importance to note, the majority of practical knowledge that was bestowed in this particular mode of learning (as opposed to more general information and background context) focused on the physical aspects of the role, whether that be strategies for ensuring officer safety, or for effecting control over subjects of police attention. This emphasis reveals the importance of this aspect to the self-conception of response officers, and subsequently the importance to the Special to understand and internalise this position.

Having left the academy with the assumption that confrontation is a routine feature of station life, all trainees found this view diluted somewhat through the observations of regular officers that this is not necessarily the case. However, their willingness to offer advice on how to manage such encounters successfully revealed its enduring cultural import as a central feature of their working personalities. Conversations in my early shifts regularly approached the topics of confrontation, violence, and danger, and I was provided practical direction on what to in response. For instance, I was advised never to dive into fight situations, but to hang back and assess first before rushing in and pushing people about. I was also advised to be wary of needle stick injuries, cautioned about their very real potential, and advised to treat everyone as if they have a dangerous item on them when searching. I was directed never to buckle myself into the backseat of a vehicle when accompanying a detained person to custody, so that I could react quickly if the subject tried to attack me. This was accompanied with a reiteration of the advice to never be complacent and always handcuff arrested suspects, even those who appear calm. This advice was issued on a shift that had actually exposed me to the transport of an arrested male, although this individual himself offered no evidence to support either principle. On another occasion I was advised to always maintain a safe distance from everyone I met, whether victim or offender, treating them as if they potentially

possessed a danger to me (this was in the context of going to meet a woman known to have HIV and spit at officers, although here she was reporting being robbed). I was also given revealing personal safety advice in a different context:

> *I am desperate for a pee, and I wonder whether it's okay for officers to use public toilets when they are out and about. Douglas guesses that I need one now with a laugh, and suggests that we go over to Northlea station, claiming that we're really close by. I think it is quite far away to be honest (a 10-minute drive in traffic), and as we pass a set of public toilets I affirm that I'm quite happy to jump out and use them quickly. Douglas dismisses this suggestion, saying that it's not really a good idea. You never know who might be in there, he declares, and they might decide to have a go at you when your back's turned because they don't like you.*

Such a sceptical outlook on the public underscored much of the practical direction offered by regular colleagues towards maintaining personal safety when in uniform, where undue risks were to be avoided at all costs. In a similar vein, Eddie recounted the following lesson from his tutor, which he had taken on board:

> *'He always handcuffs when searching someone, which I didn't think you could do, unless you could justify it, but he said 'I don't know what he's got in his pockets, and that's justification enough for me to search him in handcuffs, because as soon as he goes for his pockets I'm in the shit'. Which is fair enough because you don't know what he's got in his pockets, he could have knife or God knows what.'*

Again, as with the themes discussed above, trainees were quick to reveal a similar orientation towards this element as espoused by their regular colleagues. Take Eddie's suggestions that 'in the police you're bound to get into a fight at some stage' and 'at one point you'll have to hurt someone, it's your job' (albeit this latter reflection was followed by the assertion that 'it's better to talk them down first'). Or Dale's assertion that being personally subjected to violence is 'part and parcel' of the policing experience, which he also described as 'a horrendously dangerous position, because you're doing one of the most dangerous jobs you can do.' Those who had actually experienced confrontation, as opposed to just hearing about it, were keen to share and explore these incidents

at length in interview, especially where they provided humorous anecdotes. For example, Nate shared his experience of a 'bundle' with a 24 stone man who had destroyed his partner's kitchen. He needed eight officers to subdue him, and was eventually carried out of his house in limb restraints and effectively naked after his trousers fell down (and he wasn't wearing pants). Very revealingly, through the conversational nature of the interviews, I can also be observed retelling some of the more confrontational incidents that I had been involved in, revelling in the drama and the stimulation, and attempting to draw out the more comedic elements.

In the next chapter I will explore my growing appreciation, evidenced by experience, of how physical confrontation and the need for coercive measures were not the routine feature of station life as sold at the academy. But the repeated focussing on how to handle such incidents by regulars again perpetuated the occupational illusion of policing as a crime-fighting profession (Waddington, 1999). I suggest that this stemmed in part from their desire to reaffirm their masculine self-conception by positioning themselves as experts on the matter, responsible for promoting safety and security in the novice member by handing down the most pressing aspects of the operating ideology.

Summing up

This section has attempted to demonstrate how cultural knowledge and perspectives were both extended to, and internalised by, trainees, revealing that the ever-enduring core cultural tropes of mission ethic, cynicism, separatism, and machismo were achieving a foothold in the very early stages of trainees' frontline careers. Whilst these perspectives had already been introduced to trainees at the training school, it was at the station that they really took root. In the concluding discussion below, I will suggest how this phenomenon linked in with the trainees' overt willingness to be inducted into the station environment. But as a way of summarising here, I will let the words of Eddie speak for themselves, vividly exposing how readily such a shift had been established:

> *'In best practice, if there's a fight or something, if there's only two of you, you wait for back-up. Well that aint gonna happen in reality. You're gonnna go in and you're cause mayhem aint you, you aint got a choice, it's either you wait outside and there's a fatality because you waited outside and you get in the shit for that, or you go in, and you might be able to save someone's life. Yeah you might get in a bit of a scuffle, but if that's what you've got to do to save someone's*

life, that's what you're employed for. Alright we don't get paid, but the regulars do, and that's why you join up, to help people, you join up to save people's lives. That's basically it. Alright you're not fighting for your country in the army or anything, but you're fighting it on home turf basically'

iii) War stories

The section above discussed how trainees learn about their world and its demands by receiving a steady supply of insider information from more experienced colleagues, which mixes practical insights and contextual understandings with core cultural referents. In this section I will discuss a specific mechanism for the transmission of cultural attitudes and values, which operates in a very similar way but with a distinctive format. 'War stories' have long been recognised as a mainstay of frontline police cultures (Holdaway, 1983; Waddington, 1999; Van Hulst, 2013). What I will attempt to highlight here is the processing of such stories as a learning device by trainees, through which commentary on practice mixes with cultural knowledge, allowing them to visualise and explore aspects of the field which they are yet to encounter. As a form of indirect 'experiential learning' (Smith, 1999:88) stories and anecdotes facilitate second-hand acquaintance and encounters with policing situations, providing concrete meaning to the abstract concepts that abound within police processes and procedures (Smith, 1999). For Specials this process carries added value and meaning because their stock of exposures to frontline encounters is necessarily much sparser than their regular colleagues. Therefore, as they spend more time in the role, but without the regular, repetitive immersion enjoyed by full-time trainees, stories from others about life at the station greatly bolster the number of experiences they are able to reflect on, even if they are doing this vicariously (Kappeler et al., 1994).

The exploration of war stories as a socialisation mechanism amongst regular officers has already been explored in the literature (McNulty, 1994; Fletcher, 1996; Crank, 1998; Ford, 2003; Van Hulst, 2013; Smith, Pedersen, and Burnett, 2014; Rantatalo and Karp, 2017; Kurtz and Upton, 2018). This expanding body of research suggests that war stories, and the practice of story-telling itself, are crucial devices for the maintenance and transfer of cultural practices and the occupational values and attitudes that sustain them. As Van Hulst suggests, 'listening to stories and discussing them are

an important way for young officers to get acquainted with and integrate into the police occupational culture' (2013: 626).

As mentioned previously, Ford's (2003) research in this area examined the experiences of a large cohort of regular recruits to explore the impact of war stories on their value sets during academy training and then their first year of field training. He coded stories for their 'surface' or 'manifest' content, and also for their 'latent' content (89). Whilst the first aspect covers the overt message of a story, the latter covers its underlying meaning. Ford recorded that individual stories could have several manifest messages and latent meanings, the latter of which often required interpretation on behalf of the trainee (and researcher!) that depended on their level of exposure to the live environment. A key feature of war stories according to Ford is that they 'fill gaps in police training' by introducing officers to 'techniques and interaction gambits not formally taught or organisationally sanctioned' (105). Police training regimes, he suggests, are likely to be silent or non-specific 'relative to a wide range of situations, many of which are potentially controversial' (105), such as the use of force or the operation of discretionary powers. War stories, as a core cultural implement, offer tutors a readily accessible device for addressing those items of everyday practice that are 'ignored or poorly defined by formal training and policy', as well as those 'reoccurring and problematic street situations where no formal solutions exist' (95).

Ford offers several observations on the role of war stories in the socialisation process that are relevant to this study. Firstly, as previously mentioned, that war stories strongly tend to reinforce core cultural values. And secondly, that officers were self-aware of the developmental importance of war stories on their early careers (2003: 100-101). This identification of stories as a learning device by officers themselves, coupled with a demonstration of the culturally affirmative nature, highlights their strength as a socialisation mechanism. Reflecting on his previous police career, Smith recalls how his tutor told him 'many 'good cop stories' and 'bad cop stories' to socialise me into how to police properly and honourably' (2014: 229).

Ford also noted the prevalence of stories imparted to trainees in their early careers for transmitting street/police skills. Over half of all the stories he collated had as their primary focus a 'description of techniques and strategies physically, socially, or organisationally to control situations. These stories conveyed behavioural rules to address reoccurring and troublesome interactions.' (2003: 93-

4). Often these stories referred to incidents or situations relating to the use of force and physical threats, dovetailing with the second most common focus of stories, which covered themes of danger and uncertainty. Further content analysis, however, suggested that such stories were often vague and open ended. Clear guidelines or precise instructions were often lacking, and 'even precise stories conveyed the sense that they were exampling as opposed to providing a definite prescription' (2003: 95). This latter point is important, and feeds into the wider picture of socialisation occurring through a process of reflection and agency. Officers are generally not told how to do something, but rather informed how a certain end can be achieved, or how a situation can be resolved. It is then up to the officer to experiment with and select those examples of practice that they have been exposed to, and deploy them as they see fit (Chan, 2003). I refer to this point in my later analysis but here it is important to recognise that war stories can substantially increase the number of examples of practice that trainees can reflect on and process.

Following McNulty (1994), and Shearing and Ericson (1991), Ford concludes that stories which focus on teaching street skills 'could be better characterised as teaching street sense' (2003: 102), or what McNulty conceptualises in her study of early career socialisation as police 'common sense' knowledge (1994). Rather, stories convey to trainees 'a general sense of what to watch, whom to watch, and in a most general sense, how to proceed' (2003: 95).

Stories for Specials

Unlike the two above, this section proceeds mainly from my own experiences of been told stories. It was not a specific theme that I explored with participants at the time of interview. But I contend that it is important to include it here, as stories as a mechanism for learning were a very striking feature of my early encounters with police work. And although not explicitly covered in interview, trainees often recounted stories about their tutors and colleagues in a way that suggested they were also often introduced via this route to situations and incidents that they had not personally experienced. Further, the participants' preference for exploring their experiences through this medium from their own fledgling collections, and their aptitude in telling them, suggests that they too had been exposed to the reality of policing as a storytelling profession (Anderson and Muirhead, 2013), and understood the cultural importance of the practice (Rantatalo and Karp, 2018).

It is important to reflect on some differences between my study and Ford's. In his study, Ford interviewed a large number of officers and asked them to recount stories they had been told during training (as trainees), or stories they had told trainees (as tutors/trainers). As a modal average, interviewees typically offered four stories each. I suggest that those stories offered to him in interview tended to be ones offering a vivid example of practice, or which captured an interesting lesson on policing. This suggestion is based on him asking interviewees to recollect on their experiences, sampling those that came quickly to mind, rather than documenting storytelling as practiced in the field. Van Hulst (2013) suggests that these two methods are likely to collate very different types of story. I coded my fieldnotes to record each instance of a war story being recounted to me by experienced officers. In my first ten shifts this number was in excess of 70, revealing that this practice was in fact a very extensive one.

However, not every story was especially vivid or captivating, and many were short, perfunctory observations on practice married with a recent or historic example. This study is not able to explore the primary intent behind using war stories as a learning device on behalf of tutors, as opposed to simply using them as device to pass comment, pass the time, or provide entertainment (see Fletcher, 1999; Van Hulst, 2013). And yet, as a trainee, it is possible to find nuggets of wisdom (or 'common sense') and insight into station life on a surface and/or latent level in each one that is recounted. The following story was relayed in response to a question from myself, and delivered with much self-deprecating humour and amusement, and yet gives several cultural and practical pointers:

> *Kahui gets a stinger out of the kit box and demonstrates throwing it across the car park floor to show me how it works. I ask if he's ever used it before and he says only once, laughing as he relays that he got the wrong car. He explains how he was out with another Special, waiting for a fleeing car to come into view. He was crouched down behind the parked-up patrol car, ready to deploy, with the Special on the look-out. Thinking that he'd spied the car, the Special told Kahui to throw it, which he then did. However, he then realised that it was the wrong car, and Kahui had to hurriedly pull it back in, just in time. Apparently, the Special had seen a police vehicle up ahead following a car which looked very like the one they were supposed to be stopping, but which wasn't actually the right car. Kahui giggles as he recollects how this other*

car pulled over, looking shocked and confused. I wonder what Kahui said to them and he smiles sheepishly explaining that he just jumped into the car and drove off quickly.

The manifest content of this story counsels about the difficulties of successfully deploying the stinger device, focussing mainly on the problem of identifying the correct target vehicle! In terms of latent content, the story reveals how regulars and Specials can work together (although not always successfully!), as well revealing that awkward encounters with the public are sometimes best handled by not handling them at all (Kemp et al., 1993).

There is not the space here to pursue a thorough analysis of the manifest and latent content themes that carry through the stories conveyed during my early shifts. But one point is worthy of further discussion, which clearly emerges from an initial review of the combined content. This point follows on from Ford's observation that war stories can fill in the gaps where initial training was silent or ambiguous. Considering that the training received by Specials is so much more abbreviated than for regulars, the instructive and developmental value of war stories has huge potential and importance in this regard. In this study, this was especially the case around the use of force, and the more confrontational aspects of policing, which whilst regularly referenced in training school, were seldom explicitly discussed.

On using force

Aside from two days of learning about the techniques of coercive control, and their accompanying legal basis, the academy phase offered no further sessions on situational awareness or conflict management. Although the trainers did try to share insights on the practicalities of coercive measures, and to encourage trainees to think through situational factors, risk assessing threat levels and considering powers and policy in response, the classroom grounding for this had been a whistle-stop tour, and the focus of the weekend was mainly directed to the mechanics of gaining control and compliance.

Having finally reached the live environment, trainees' experiences of the reality of the role suddenly confront them with a wave of contextual and situationally-specific behaviour. As much as listening

to the stories and direction of trainers at the academy is impactive, this is quickly surpassed by the experience of watching things play out in front of you for real, or even having to take an active part in them. Having previously only ever witnessed role-play simulation or parody, trainees are soon exposed to the ways in which officers confront and attempt to control real life situations. The arrest of the male from the hospital discussed above was a greatly impactful experience for me in this regard. War stories on the use of force build on the trainee's growing awareness of coercive measures in a way that could not have been achieved in training school now that they have actual practical demonstrations to reflect on.

My early shifts were routinely accompanied by storied insights on the practicalities of using force, and the grounded application of the subject. For instance, one officer relayed with assertion how a drunken criminal damage suspect 'hit the pavement pretty quickly' once he started to racially abuse one of their colleagues, leaving little doubt as to how such behaviour was considered and confronted. Later on an officer provided this detailed anecdote, prompted by my query about the best ways to stop someone who's running away (in terms of being effective and lawful):

> *I ask whether it would be appropriate or not to rugby tackle someone if they were trying to get away from us (having heard elsewhere from experienced Specials that we weren't supposed to do this). Slipper declares that you can do whatever you need to. He talks me through a story where he once had to take down a fleeing suspect. He describes how he had given this guy plenty of warnings to stop as he ran away from him, but was getting no response. As he closed in, he ran through the various options available to him. He considered trying a dive from where he was, but was wary of missing the target and landing on his face. He decided to use an 'old school take down' instead, which involved kicking out the trailing leg of the suspect as he ran, so that he tripped himself up and hit the floor. Slipper relays how the suspect slid on his front for several metres before coming to a stop, at which point he jumped on his back and cuffed him. The 'best bit' about it, Slipper declares, was that it wasn't even him! I ask what happened and he goes back to the beginning, explaining that a girl had just been assaulted in town, and had given a description of the offender as wearing a checked shirt and heading off a particular way. Slipper gave pursuit, and soon identified a male up ahead, who started to run away from him and wouldn't stop when he called, hence the take down. Slipper realised he probably had the wrong guy after he had cuffed him and*

started talking to him. The male was adamant that it wasn't him, and Slipper thought that something wasn't right. It turned out that it was actually his mate who had done it. He had also been wearing a checked shirt, but had put on a blue jacket before he ran away. When Slipper explained to the male why he had initially suspected him, and why this was only compounded when the male started to run away from him, the male agreed that it was fair enough. To try and demonstrate my learning, and as a way of reasoning it through myself, I surmise that he had reasonable grounds for suspecting the individual he eventually tackled (considering the description and the fact he ran away), and that his use of force was reasonable, since he had to apprehend and detain the fleeing suspect. Slipper confirms all of this was a stoic nod, as if it was unnecessary for me to go into it in such detail.

Stories such as these are vivid examples of how officers rationalise their use of force depending on the situation, but also, crucially, how the concept extends beyond the standardised moves and techniques imparted at training school, and instead encompasses a range of physical tactics that might not be formally sanctioned or endorsed, but have a grounded, frontline application. These fieldnotes also helpfully capture my attempts to process the example within my evolving understanding of coercive measures.

Whilst the above incident highlights the novel (or unorthodox) and discretionary approach towards use of force tactics that featured at the station, I was also exposed to several tales relating to PPE and techniques that I had been trained to use at training school. One officer relayed a tale of taking a male into custody in handcuffs, but then being asked to take them off by the custody sergeant, against the officers' recommendations, because the suspect pleaded with the sergeant for this and he relented. Within one minute the suspect was pinned to the ground because he had tried to 'kick off again'. The effectiveness of the handcuffs, and the soundness of the officer's justification for using them, were vividly portrayed by the subsequent scene following their removal. Another officer explained how he had only once used his baton to strike someone, relaying that on this occasion he and a colleague had pulled a male from behind the wheel of a car after he had led them on a dangerous high-speed pursuit through the backroads of Westshire. As the male came out of the car he was fighting and resisting in a way that the officer didn't like, making him think he had a weapon that he was trying to get to. So he delivered a single baton strike to the guy's thigh, and he dropped

to the floor like a 'sack of shit'. In relation to the use of CS incapacitant spray, I was afforded the following insightful lesson:

> *Douglas explains how he was called out to a taxi company one night because someone had broken into the office and was smashing everything up. When officers attended, he refused to come out and threatened them with violence, throwing a cabinet against his side of the door, which made Douglas and the Inspector who was also present assess that sending someone in would only get them hurt. They were watching and communicating with this guy through a little window hatch, and so they eventually decided to empty their canisters into the office and then close the hatch. He chuckles as he relays how he and the Inspector stepped back and watched the CCTV from inside the room as this guy stumbled about, eventually being overcome by the CS gas before slumping to the floor and finally agreeing to come out quietly.*

These three stories, mixed in with several others across my early shifts, promoted the usefulness, and adaptability, of applying the tools of the trade to the business of attaining control in the face of confrontation.

Alongside experiencing incidents first hand, war stories provide trainees with vital additional exposures to the physical aspects of policing, hinting at some of the background conditions for when and where something is acceptable. They tell of the almost infinite variety of jobs to which officers may be called, which the trainee is able to start processing against what they have now seen and experienced. But they also reveal crucial pointers as to how officers orientate themselves to such business on the ground. Not only do the frontline cops know best how to use their equipment, but the stories also relay how entertainment can be found in situations of confrontation and aggression. The casual tone in which the CS story and the tripping anecdote were retold suggest to the audience that such situations are ripe for informal sharing and reflection. And in doing so, the masculine aspects of the occupational culture are reaffirmed and conferred (Fletcher, 1996; Kurtz and Upton, 2018).

3. Discussion - Needs fulfilment

In chapter two, Schein's 'sociodynamic theory' was identified as a useful model for exploring the transmission of cultural components from experienced insiders to new members seeking induction into the police. To recap, the fulfilment of three core needs that are generated in these members is cast as fundamental for ensuring their successful induction into their new social context; 1) a need for inclusion, which offers a role and identity in the group, 2) a need to master the environment, permitting some degree of influence and control within the group, and 3) a need to feel accepted and secure within the group. All three of the needs described within sociodynamic theory clearly dovetail into each other and overlap. Achieving a measure of control as competence is fundamental to supporting a genuine sense of identity in the trainee, and crucial for others in extending their acceptance. Similarly, only once the trainee is accepted within the group will they begin to utilise influence amongst their peers, and feel secure as to the nature of their role therein. The early experiences of novice Specials will now be considered against each of these needs in turn to explore how the dynamics of socialisation begin to take hold at the station.

Identity

To begin to feel included within their new social setting, trainees need to feel a sense of occupational identity establishing. Whilst the training school experiences (and as discussed in chapter four, even some of those before this) do much to initiate this process, encouraging recruits to think differently about themselves and others, the environment in which this occurs is not the correct field for delivering meaningful experiences to substantiate such an identity. It is only on the ground in the field of actual police work that trainees can begin to properly self-conceive of themselves as officers now that they are experiencing it first-hand. And yet this is where much of the contention and distraction for Specials lies.

The topic of identity was explored in detail with interview participants, and a relatively consistent picture emerged from the cohort, although there were subtle variations. Trainees generally viewed themselves as 'coppers', or 'police officers' or 'constables', and usually presented themselves this way to members of the public who knew no different. This was until they were challenged on

something and had to break cover, which grounded their self-awareness, as Dale explained: '……people looking at you to find out what happens next, like the paramedics, and I'm like 'I don't have a bloody clue sort of thing!' I feel like I'm still watching a little bit.'

Often interviewees referenced the uniform, and the transformational effect that it had on their self-perception and self-confidence. Again, Dale explained:

> *'I feel like I'm Dale the police officer now, it feels like part of me. Yeah, it's strange. When you put the uniform on you do feel like a bit of different person don't you. God, that's a really wanky thing to say! [laughing]…… It's almost like there's two sides to me. In real life I'm not anything like I am when I'm on duty.'*

And here Eddie extends this to include his police badge, or 'warrant card':

> *'Yeah, getting the uniform and putting it on makes it real. Training wasn't real until you got the PPE. When you got a set of handcuffs that was it real then. I can actually physically do something now, technically. And then when you get the warrant card, I can actually act on stuff I've seen……It makes you feel proud of yourself, being a copper, because you've got this badge in your pocket, and you can actually do something with it. It gives you a bit more confidence to do something about it I suppose.'*

Those officers who had developed a sense of themselves as police officers often linked this back to being useful to regular colleagues, rather than to a more altruistic sense of 'serving the public' directly, and this was certainly the case with me. As a Special, one needs to get to grips with the strange experience of being undistinguishable from regulars to members of the public, but quickly discernible to others inside the station. In most forces Specials have a number on their epaulettes (their 'collar number') which follows a particular pattern, different from regulars, and as such is easily spotted by those in the know. Whilst people on the street reacted to me in uniform, displaying curiosity, deference, or hostility in varying degrees (something other participants often discussed), I was often cut off, ignored, or simply dismissed by regular colleagues. Whilst the former felt rewarding and gratifying, the latter experiences tempered any burgeoning sense of identity.

However, as I accumulated more experience and was able to feel useful on some level, I was able to feel a greater sense of self-worth through contributing at least some meaningful assistance to my regular colleagues. Whilst interacting with the public in a purposeful, positive way supplemented this as well, it was through my relationships with regular colleagues that I mainly developed my sense of self during this period. This was also evident amongst interview participants who often structured their evolving sense of identity around helping the regulars, over helping members of the public. Their loyalty to the 'police family' had quickly formed.

However, some participants were also very conscious of their status as volunteers, as something distinct from the regulars. As Terry suggested, 'I imagined I would be doing everything a police officer does, but then I am only a Special'. They felt this was imposed upon them as part of the natural order, and was to be accepted. As such, they were disparaging of other Specials that referred to themselves as PCs and tried to be above their station. Bob reflected this dual self-perception well, offering:

> *'I do see myself as a police officer, and a Special, and I switch between the two a little bit. When I'm with friends I'm a police officer, when I'm with [the regulars] I'm a Special. And that's fine because it's where you sit in the grand scheme of things.'*

Two further points are worthy of note here. The first relates to the importance to trainees of establishing an identity in the mould of traditional 'cop' culture imagery. For instance, those participants that had arrested someone or dealt with confrontation often referred to these experiences in interview, even though they were 'highlights' and not indicative of their shifts. Whereas those that had not yet, such as Terry, conveyed frustration at this. Bob, reflecting on how he now views himself, captured this perfectly:

> '*What I find the weirdest is that it's me doing it, when I've worked in the private sector for 12 years. And my mates are like 'are you really doing that?' and I'm like 'I've just arrested someone' and it's quite a nice feeling. [laughing]. Or I've just driven through the backroads of Westshire at 90mph with the lights on, and that was fucking awesome!'*

In a very similar way, after only a few shifts at the station, I also started to yearn for more 'action' and excitement from my shifts, hoping for some of my own stories to tell, having listened to so many

by then (See Bullock and Leeney, 2016 for similar findings among Specials). Having absorbed the cues as to what aspects of their role response officers held most highly, my novice self was eager to experience them, and establish a profile, internally and externally, that fitted with the dominant cultural currents. Although at the same time I was also developing a grounded awareness of the relative infrequency with which such events occurred.

The second important point is that some trainees, myself very much included, were at pains in their early encounters to forge an identity for themselves as a particular 'type' of Special. As will be explored below in terms of acceptance, this was very much linked to an awareness of how some Specials were received in the station. Nate was a strong proponent of this position, looking ahead to joining the regulars:

> *'I actually prefer just going out with my tutor or someone on the team and just doing what the response team are doing, rather than actually getting involved with the Special Constable stuff…… Doing stuff like switching on the lights at the mall, and other crappy things like that, I've got no interest in. That's like a Hobby-Bobbies job.'*

But he was also matched by Bob, who himself had no career interest in policing. Bob wanted to be seen as a 'genuine resource rather than just someone that comes in every other weekend for a shift and then disappears again'. Aware of how some Specials were considered 'Micky Mouse' because of their perceived ineptitude, often those in positions of supervisory responsibility, Bob sought to keep his distance, and demonstrate this to others: 'I don't need the Specials hierarchy, because when I'm in, I'm with the regulars. And I'm fine with it. If I need anything, I go to the regulars and get it.'

Control

The need for control, for mastery over the environment, extends in two ways. Novice officers need to establish both proficiency in how they handle police encounters, generating the basic competencies required of the role, and also a measure of influence amongst their peers as they seek to establish themselves within the group. Control in terms of competence is a daunting and distant thing for Specials to contemplate during their early shifts, now that they are fully confronted by

their ignorance of station life, and aware of the need to follow the lead of experienced colleagues if they are to reverse this at all. A catalogue of policing tasks and the techniques needed to achieve them is laid bare before trainees, who are initially only able to achieve aptitude in the most basic of them, and have yet to even confront the full scale of what the role will eventually require. Control in terms of influence feels similarly remote, given the dominance of response officers at the station, and the deferential way in which the relationship between Special and regular is both experienced through early interactions and perceived through observation.

My early encounters with the live environment were characterised by feelings of anxiety, confusion, and being out of my depth, which took several shifts to dissipate. An acute awareness of my relative levels of (in)competence permeated my self-perceptions, and control as role proficiency felt very distant. As Nate relayed, 'there are still times when I don't know what's going on, and I'm just standing there looking hard, or just standing there.' These feelings were addressed in me by two factors. Firstly, a growing trust and understanding that others would take the lead in handling situations and direct me as to what was needed, which absolved my worries about being overexposed. And secondly, that in the absence of control I would at least try and obtain it (in some measure) as quickly as I could through proactive learning, commitment, and routine exposure to station life. These observations helped me to gradually relax into the role in those early stages, consoling myself with the notion of playing a supporting part, and the adequacy of this for the meanwhile.

These two factors were also replicated in the experiences of the interview participants. Thinking about the security provided by trainees' tutors and colleagues, Eddie relayed how he was reluctant to patrol with anyone else, now that he had established a rapport with his tutor, whilst others expressed an appreciation for the way their tutors often took control of situations. In another revealing insight, Bob relayed how he valued his regular colleagues in this regard, reflecting again on the themes of identity and acceptance that he intuitively linked into thinking about control as competence. Here he is talking about taking part in a Specials-only operation, patrolling with Specials who were 'solo-authorised':

> *'It's quite different being out with Specials as opposed to being out with regulars. It does feel quite different. No-one in the car is doing it day in, day out. Even though some of them are*

> *experienced, they're not living it. They're like 'oh what would you do here?' whereas regulars are like bang bang bang. So even when I'm signed off, I'd still wanna go with the team, because I think I'd still want that camaraderie, and if shit did hit the fan, there is someone there you know. Like 'Ummmm…..Sarge…..''*

In terms of working to attain a measure of control themselves, each of the interview participants professed their desire to learn more about how police work operates in practice, and the ways in which they tried to achieve this during their shifts. Whilst all of the trainees actively sought out advice and guidance through questioning and attempting to interpret the actions of their colleagues, several relayed an awareness that sometimes their learning had to take a backseat. For instance, Eddie explained, 'I ask my tutor what if? But I feel bad asking him like 'what do we do?' on the way to jobs, when he's driving at stupid speeds and that!'. Nate offered a very similar observation: 'When a more high pressured job comes in, he goes into overdrive and just zones out, and I completely agree. There's no point fucking around and asking your Special what you think you should do next. Just get involved.'

As a collective, participants were very cognisant of the fact (as they saw it) that their learning and development was not always an organisational priority, in the same way that regular trainees were accommodated. Dale appeared very accepting of the fact that he did not have a tutor yet, considering there were regular officer probationers to train first on his team. Others displayed similar understanding when their tutors were taken away from them to similarly assist, or they had to share them with another Special. As Bob relayed, 'that's where you know your place again, and that's fine'. Such reflections fed back into trainees' awareness of their relational position as volunteers within the policing landscape, reaffirming their subordinate status.

Still, being shown one's place did not prohibit trainees from being shown how to make sense of police work from a cultural perspective. As well as transmitting the central themes of police culture, officers on the ground also showed a willingness to demonstrate working rules and culturally approved procedures, assisting the trainees' learning and development by re-orientating them to the practical reality of policing. We have discussed above how stop-search tactics on the ground differed significantly from 'best practice', as Eddie often called his academy training. I have also discussed the operationalisation of the 'attitude test' as well as multiple directives on how and when

to resort to force, revealed to me through demonstration, insight, and anecdote. The agreeableness of trainees towards such modifications to their initial learning and their general receptiveness towards the presentation of street-skills brought them closer to the operational fold, demonstrating what control as competence could look like. But in this initial stage of transitioning between the academy and the frontline, the tempo of the tutorship phase is not set by practice and experimentation. Whilst some practical aspects might be tentatively engaged with, street-schooling experiences here are generally in the mould of 'watch/listen and learn'.

Acceptance

Whilst novice Specials can expect a certain level of welcome and acceptance from regular peers during their early forays into the live environment, they must also expect to remain on the periphery of the wider group until they have demonstrated commitment to the role and proven that they can be trusted, both in an operational and cultural capacity. This may not come for a long time, if ever. Most of my understanding of the dynamics between regulars and Specials came from the espoused attitudes of regular officers on their volunteer colleagues. The role itself was valued to some degree, in that Specials increased the number of officers on the street; the more people parading in high-vis and hats, the greater the visual deterrent against crime would be, it was suggested. Specials could bolster resources for things like traffic operations, meaning that frontline cops wouldn't need to be removed from their daily duties and leave their colleagues at the station vulnerable of getting a 'pasting' because they were overstretched. Those Specials who invested time in the role and showed commitment to their teams could be embraced as *officers*, not just Specials, an officer once declared. We sometimes worked with an experienced Special who had volunteered on the same team for many years for whom I could see this was the case, mainly through his participation in the station banter. Both Bob and Dale also recognised the impact of a having a well-liked, experienced Special on their teams for promoting a positive reception. Dale explained, '[h]e's a star Special, and sets it up quite nicely for me because the team know that they can trust a Special, and they're quite happy to integrate and help out'. Bob added to this that his tutor and several other regular colleagues had been Specials themselves: 'I think [it] makes a big difference, because they a) saw the value in doing it, and b) can appreciate why you'd want to do it'.

However, all bar Eddie offered cognisance of the wariness and suspicion towards Specials that circulated at the station in some quarters. Nate explained how his tutor had had a 'bad Special' before, relaying,

> *'Apparently you get a lot of Specials who 'just come in for the action' type, on the Friday and Saturday nights, who try and get involved in a bust up or ruckus or whatever. But he said there's nothing worse than that, when they don't really want to know.'*

Where Specials were perceived as coming into the station just to wear the uniform, without showing a willingness to contribute to the workload of the regulars, they fostered a resentment to the role that extended to others, especially when they made mistakes, which then tarnished the reputation of Specials generally. Some Specials were seen as 'know it alls', who thought they knew 'the job' better than the regulars who do it day in, day out, whereas in fact they were inept and incompetent. These Specials generally kept themselves separate from the regular officer teams, going out in small groups and at irregular times, rather than crewing with regular officers and contributing to the shift work. Their perceived unwillingness to integrate with the regulars served to exclude them further. There were of course war stories to be heard about such individuals, including the one retold to me about the Special who discharged his incapacitant spray inside a night club, against policy, meaning the venue had to evacuated as the chemicals entered the air conditioning system. Both Nate and Bob were aware of similar stories on their district about senior Specials who had achieved the opposite of acceptance and integration, and were quick to distance themselves from these officers:

> *'There used to be a thing on our district called 91, which is the call sign, and it was Specials all going out in a riot van, a 'party bus', and doing stuff by themselves. And they do it now and then. When you hear 91 come up on the radio, my tutor was like 'oh for fucks sake' and you know every other officer is doing that, because it's just a waste of time. They do like an introductory session on district, and that's what we did. We went out with two really anal Specials supervisors. Yeah, I didn't really get a lot out of it really. Just drove around in a bus. And that was it, and I thought no, going out with Specials.'* [Nate]

> *'I know some Specials and the regulars go 'oh God' you're out'. And they see them as mickey mouse. Stories going around about Specials who all went out on a bus, and they just caused*

> *loads of shit, making trouble for the regulars. It doesn't help people's perception. They're seen as some Harry Hill-type character who just cocks about because they can. They've got the power, so I'm gonna go cause some shit. Some of them are even supervisors…… The minute I say I've got Jerry and Rob as my supervisors, they say well he smells and he's a knob. And I just say, 'I'm not being funny, but I don't do anything with them. That's why I'm staying with you lot. Because if you respect me I don't give a shit what they think, because it's not them that's out, that you're trying to help'.'* [Bob]

Bob's case is interesting as he professed the most affiliation with regular colleagues in the interviews, even though he had no plans of joining them full-time. He did offer that he had instrumentally undertaken the experience 'partly to have a bit more of a social network', and was quick to relay how he had been invited out on socials and had 'banter outside of the job as well, on text and stuff'. He clearly drew a connection between building friendships and committing to the team. His overt desire for integration resulted in him volunteering a considerable amount of time in the months following his departure from training school. And he appeared to have achieved a significant measure of this, evidenced through his nomination for 'Special of the Year' by his tutor and others, backing up his assertion that 'I genuinely do feel part of the team.' Like Nate and Dale, he had established the necessary connection between being useful, or a 'resource', and becoming accepted. As Nate explained 'There's nothing I'd like more than to be properly integrated onto the team, and be seen as competent', whereas Dale offering the following:

> *'Some people may have it in the back of their minds, oh he's a Special, she's a Special. That's just like a preconception isn't it. That's why it's so important to me to be able to prove that I can get stuck in, I think. To try and convince them that I'm a police officer, that I'm not just a Special.'*

However, novice Specials recognise that competence is very much a work in progress. Over the course of my early shifts I was able to anticipate what levels of acceptance within the wider group I could expect based on this, and square myself with this. But as I became more of an established presence, the blank looks and glances onto my shoulder gradually subsided and were mostly replaced with genuine greetings and gestures of inclusion. Feeling valued (or not) is routinely recognised in the literature as a source self-worth (and frustration) for Specials (Bullock and Leeney,

2016; Britton et al. 2016). But trainees feel value in different ways, depending on the levels of acceptance they hope for. Continuing the position founded at the training school, I too began to disassociate myself from those Specials at the station that generated such hostility, and attempted instead to demonstrate my allegiance to the regular officer body, yet simultaneously having to acknowledge my fundamental disparity in status.

Taking stock

One of the central observations to emerge from studies of regular officer training, is that whilst there is consistency in many areas, there is no uniformity in how trainees participate with the socialisation process (Fielding, 1988; Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017). Reasons for this broadly fall into two categories; factors relating to the trainee, and factors relating to their environment.

Thinking first about the trainee, it is important to recognise that each new member engages with the formal and informal influences of the occupation in their own way (Bacon, 2014). This is because trainees present to their new role with individual backgrounds and prior experiences, and seek a variety of outcomes from their experiences (Chan, 2003; Heslop, 2011). It might be hypothesised that the socialisation process for Specials will highlight this lack of uniformity even more given the range of motivators that drive people to volunteer and their diverse social situations away from the volunteering experience (Hieke, 2017b). Across the six officers whose experiences were reviewed here, four approached the experience of Specialing primarily with egoistic, career-focussed motivations, whilst the other two sought excitement, novel experiences, and social interaction. Some were in their late teens working part-time, whilst others were over ten years older with established private-sector careers.

Thinking next about the environment, the literature suggests that learning experiences may differ considerably depending on several contingent features, including the tutor and team that trainees are aligned to, local supervision and management structures and styles, and the areas in which they first learn to practice their craft. Personalities of colleagues, local aspects of the working culture, and local police-community relations can vary significantly and combine to create diverse learning environments (Chan, 2001; 2003). In the context of this cohort, the six officers were based at five

different stations with differing demographics and community problems. Some trainees had experienced tutors, some had the opposite, and some had no tutor at all.

The proceeding analysis of this chapter has sought to highlight how much of the Specialing experience was the same for each trainee, irrespective of these differences. All trainees revealed an appreciation for street-based learning over classroom schooling, having now encountered the realities of police work first hand, and the practical adaptations deployed by regular colleagues in response to the live environment. Similarly, all trainees revealed a growing awareness of the core themes of the occupational culture they were now apprenticed to, and had begun to strengthen their own operational perspectives in line with the dominant value sets. After only a small amount of grounded experiences, each trainee had begun to address their need for identity, control, and acceptance through engagement with that culture, propounding norms of familiarity and solidarity, promoting the mission ethic of crime-fighting and adrenaline-fuelled exploits, and championing working rules and perceptual frameworks to make sense of policing situations. However, on an individual level, the picture is much more complex. To highlight this, I will discuss the experiences of two trainees; Bob and Eddie.

As mentioned above, Bob had no intention of joining the regular ranks. He had a well-paid job and lived a lifestyle which he acknowledged, with some regret, would be incompatible with the starting salary of regular recruits. He had applied to join the Specials to get more of an insight into the work of the police, having always had a passing interest in the field, and because he was looking for an experience that would extend his social circles. This egoistic motivation, by his own admission, drew him closer to his regular colleagues and he framed his training experience around proving himself and becoming part of the team. He was outgoing and could keep pace with the banter of backstage interactions, and readily accepted the manner in which police tasks were accomplished on the ground, and the presentation of officers to their work. He strongly identified with many of the sentiments and general outlook of the regulars. In fact, he even over-identified with some of them by expressing his belief that they understood his motivations for being a Special, having done it themselves, even though they likely undertook the experience from a career-orientated perspective. His need for acceptance and inclusion cautioned him from associating with other Specials who had failed to meet those needs as he saw it, and he set about to trying to establish a profile for himself which acknowledged his volunteer, novice status, whilst demonstrating his

affiliation with his regular colleagues. His socialisation journey was progressing at speed as he raced towards an attainment of formal competence, alongside achieving meaningful integration and recognition from the those in charge of his informal induction.

Eddie's experience was very different, not that he could necessarily perceive it himself at the time. Hampered by commitments at work and at home, he had struggled to co-ordinate his shifts with his tutor, who was also training another new Special. Therefore, his encounter was much less extensive than Bob's. However, he remained very positive about his role and continued to look forward to one day joining the regular ranks. He picked up on the main cultural cues of his regular colleagues and extended willing acceptance of their operating practices and perspectives. However, his promotion of those perspectives in fact conveyed a telling culturally immaturity. He over-exaggerated the sense of mission, beyond what regular officers would propound. Recall his comments on policing as 'fighting for your country on home turf' (paraphrasing – p. 177). In other ways he showed a telling lack of insight. He was the only interviewee not to recognise the inherent tension between the regular and volunteer constabularies, and so recognised no conflict in his status disparity. More than any of the others, he self-identified as a 'copper', even though he had not acquired or demonstrated any culturally meaningful attributes. By his own admission, the most he had done so far in uniform was take witness details at an RTC.

Eddie's socialisation journey took a very different path to Bob's. Shortly after we met for his interview, he left the Special Constabulary. I was informed third-hand that he had encountered a confrontational situation with his tutor, which had overwhelmed him at the time and afterwards, and he stopped volunteering shortly after. Initially readily engaging with the interview process, he was evasive and reluctant when I tried to follow up with him. McNulty suggests it is important to focus on the negative incidents of socialisation, to explore instances of attrition, to fully understand the dynamics of the socialisation experience. Studying the reasons behind a failure to integrate will be as revealing of the main drivers of socialisation as focussing on those reasons that deliver success (1994: ch. 7).

It is not possible to fully explicate these factors in Eddie's case because of his lack of engagement. But it is possible to suggest reasons why using the framework of needs fulfilment. For instance, Eddie's inability to respond appropriately in the face of confrontation was a realisation that he was

not a crime-fighter, denying him that aspect of identity which he himself so vigorously promoted. Alternatively, his inability to affect control over the situation was too disorientating and uncomfortable. Or perhaps in the aftermath of failing to prove himself when tested, he doubted finding an appropriate level of acceptance.

Such speculation is undertaken only to highlight the usefulness of exploring the socialisation of Specials by focussing on their needs, and acknowledging that these are fulfilled or denied on an individual basis, and contingent on a range of personal and environmental factors. Eddie's status anxiety upon being exposed to this formative incident was too great for him to continue to seek membership within the group. But for others this might not have been the case. For instance, Dale suffered a serious assault during one of his first shifts, taken unawares by a drunken male he was trying to assist. However, he reflected on the incident and used it to cultivate a general wariness of people and a much more guarded stance in line with what he witnessed from experienced colleagues. He received a great deal of support on the night (especially from those who swiftly arrested the suspect with little subtlety) and senior management in the days after, enhancing his sense of self-worth and feelings of acceptance.

This chapter has focussed in detail on this crucial stage of early career development, which is recognised in the literature as such, but little understood. The 'gap' between the academy and tutorship phases is very real (Whittle, 2014), and for some it becomes too great to negotiate. The occupational culture appeals to volunteer trainees, in a very similar way to regular trainees, as a resource for promoting the fulfilment of fundamental interpersonal needs which will bind them to the wider group. The modes of learning through which trainees come to learn about their role provide practical pointers and ideological insight on how to successfully integrate at the station, whilst reminding them of their volunteer status. But they still need to be processed on a personal level. Individual variation in officers will be affected by the commitment they can give to the role, and their reasons for doing it. In the following chapter I will discuss how the dynamic of needs fulfilment continues to drive the socialisation process throughout the rest of the tutorship phase and the bounds of occupational culture are brought ever more in focus.

Chapter 7

Stage 4: Metamorphosis
Becoming Special

This chapter follows on from the last in continuing the longitudinal exploration of the socialisation process for Specials, looking at the final stage in the socialisation journey within Van Maanen's framework; *metamorphosis*. However, this stage is perhaps not best described as a 'stage' at all. Rather, metamorphosis describes a point at which the trainee has sufficiently aligned themselves to the occupational culture, marking the end of the initial socialisation experience (Van Maanen, 1975). This chapter will proceed by continuing to document the learning and development experiences that ensued following the initial encounters discussed in the last chapter, before conceptualising the extent to which a metamorphosis had occurred as the training programme came to an end.

This thesis proceeds on the basis that successful socialisation into the police requires new members to develop a working understanding of the cultural knowledge of their reference group; those assumptions, values, cognitions, and behavioural norms that condition their approach to police work, and sustain their informal working practices. Police culture, as the repository of cultural knowledge, is underscored by four central tenets; cynicism, us/them, a masculine ethos, and an exaggerated sense of mission. Therefore, successful candidates must understand the occupational relevance of these four core themes if they are to find their place amongst their peers. This chapter explores the ways in which these core tenets are further interpreted as a trainee's experience of police work accumulates and they begin to discern some of the stable features of their new environment.

This chapter proceeds in five sections. Firstly, I will set up some context for learning in the field in the period under study here, in terms of the literature on regular recruit training, and the methodological approach adopted during this phase of the research. I will also offer some considerations on the conflict between formal and informal conceptions of competence, and the ways in which the attainment of these drives learning in the field. Turning to the mechanisms of

socialisation that come into focus, I will next consider the use of humour as a central cultural practice for promoting bonding within the police environment and helping new members to process the demands of the role. I will then approach the concept of metamorphosis, and consider whether my experiences of police work and cultural practice coalesced, and the degrees to which I was aligned to the four kernel cultural tenets. Doing so will provide a perspective on the extent of my socialisation by the end of my training experience. In the following section, I will summarise my case study by assessing the ways in which engagement with culture fulfilled the three core needs of identity, control, and acceptance as primary drivers of this socialisation process. I will then conclude with some observations on what metamorphosis might mean in the context of Specials.

A confession and a cautionary note

Before I move to the analysis, a confession, and a note of caution, are required. In terms of the former, I should disclose here that I did not officially finish the training programme. I was never 'signed off' for solo-patrol. This is because I left the Specials to join a Constabulary as a regular officer before this could be achieved. However, I contend that this should not overly detract from my pronouncements here for several reasons. Firstly, I spent 14 months volunteering well over 300 hours as a trainee at the station. The directive from those overseeing the training programme was that Specials completed their learning portfolio within approximately 12 months and a volunteering a minimum of 200 hours (although this was rarely enforced). Secondly, by the end of training I had 'completed' everything in the portfolio besides issuing traffic tickets and initial RTC scene management. These aspects were left to the end because regular colleagues considered them a formality that could be addressed in one or two days of specific application. Thirdly, on my penultimate shift I was given a tasking by our sergeant that involved me driving to another station and charging a suspect in company with his appropriate adult, without colleagues' supervision. This was a relatively basic procedure, but needed to completed proficiently, and had I been accosted by anyone or come across an incident on the journeys there and back I would have needed to respond. This was an unofficial endorsement of my competence and readiness to undertake some solo-taskings, in advance of the formal process being satisfied. Therefore, because of these three factors,

I affirm that my experiences validate discussion and analysis of the end of the training programme, with this caveat borne in mind.

With regards to the note of caution, I return to a point I made in chapter three concerning my interpretation of police culture as a researcher, which whilst greatly aided by the fact that I was a trainee Special (a complete member), still required a significant degree of interpretation *as a Special* as part of the socialisation process. Within this, there was the distinct possibility that I would misinterpret the cultural practice of others as I observed it, being not yet fully conversant with that culture. This is important to bear in mind throughout this chapter because it highlights the potential for me to apply unfounded critical assessments to the working practices of others as I attempted to establish their reasons for action.

1. Learning in the field – a Special case study

A focal feature of successful socialisation into the police involves the identification and internalisation of the cultural perspectives and working rules of one's peers. This in turn requires an awareness of the core tenets of police culture, which often underscore action in the field (Chan, 2003; Loftus, 2010). But cultural perspectives and working rules do not just apply to the interpretation and application of powers and policies; such as the use of discretion when confronted with offences, decisions around the recording or classifying of incidents, or the practical conduct of certain stock procedures (such as arrest or stop-search). They also apply to a vast array of situational considerations which are mediated by conventional rules of wisdom and etiquette; including how quickly (or not) to get to certain incidents, how to manage interactions with members of the public in the various environments that they are encountered (and similarly, other police personnel), or how best to support and assist your colleagues. These rules often intertwine and overlap, but can also contrast and contradict. Sometimes they will support the formal position of the organisation, but at other times they will undermine it. Therefore, they cannot be learnt in isolation and applied as such, and can only be acquired through an immersive, interpretive process. The tutorship phase for Specials provides the opportunity to engage in such a process, to a greater or lesser extent.

The previous chapter explored the ways in which trainees begin to accumulate information about their new environment, performing mainly rudimental technical tasks as they remain in the background, watching, listening, and learning. This chapter seeks to extend this picture by incorporating the learning experiences that come from acquiring an additional familiarity with the environment; not just from distilling a fuller picture of how regulars explain the world to trainees, but also from exploring that world for themselves, and negotiating any lack of fit between the two.

The literature on regular recruitment suggests that metamorphosis does not necessarily entail that all recruits acquire the same 'final position' at the end of their socialisation experience (Fielding, 1988; Chan, 2003). Rather, successful socialisation requires that recruits acquire a fit with dominant cultural practice (Charman, 2017). The model for socialisation used by this study suggests that it is an acknowledgement of the practicalities of working rules, and alignment to the core characteristics of police culture, that assists recruits in satisfying those three interpersonal needs so fundamental to successful integration. Police culture and its local practices helps new recruits develop a sense of role and identity and feel included, it helps them attain influence in the field and amongst peers, and it helps them to feel accepted and secure. These three themes will be addressed directly at the end of this chapter, but feature throughout the subsequent discussions.

The literature also suggests that recruits do not pass through the socialisation process as automatons, passively receiving the collective cultural wisdom. Rather, a more dynamic picture is developed, revealing that recruits interpret the cultural practice of others with agency and autonomy, reflecting on the various 'practice models' that they see demonstrated in the field (Fielding, 1988; Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017). The research suggests that recruits are able to self-identify and distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' police work, (Chan, 2001; Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017), and whilst 'the influence of the occupational culture is overwhelming, officers' practices are not necessarily totally guided by it' (Chan, 2003: 18). There is latitude to make up their own mind about the kind of officers they want to become, establishing their own styles of practice, especially when working alone (Fielding, 1988).

The methodological approach of the thesis shifts in this chapter to solely focus on my experiences of learning in the field as I progressed through the final stage of the training programme. What emerges from my field data is the recognition of significant reflective practice on my part, as I

evaluated the practice models on display, and sought to establish an occupational identity in line with the kind of officer I wanted to become. Sometimes this included critical appraisals of practice and perspectives. But it will also become clear how I demonstrated endorsement of elements of cultural practice and much of police culture's foundational structures. Several points need to be recognised before we begin, however.

On 'Competence'

The total training period under study in this thesis comprises of 36 shifts, 26 of which will be considered in this chapter. Whilst this included a significant amount of field experiences, this still represents a relatively minimal amount of shift work from which to assess socialisation. Studies of regular officer cohorts usually track officers throughout their academy training, accompanied patrol, and then for at least the first two years of working without a tutor (solo-patrol, or patrolling with different officers) (Van Maanen, 1975; Chan, 2003; Charman, 2017). And these are regular officers, who have a much greater initial grounding in police procedures, learn through regular routine and repetition, have the assurances of the organisation at a local and total level to support their learning, and are on the same social capital standing as their immediate peers (albeit they may need to show initial deference to experience (Chan, 2003)). None of these factors are present in the training of Specials. Therefore, it will be much harder, nigh on impossible, for Specials to able to attain operational *informal* competence with cultural perspectives and working rules, which I suggest is the true marker of the initial socialisation process ending, by the end of the period under study. Partly because they are Specials, but also because they will not have had enough time to develop and experiment with practice in the field. Therefore, seeking to assess a metamorphosis at the end of the training programme is premature. This is a point I will also develop further in the concluding section to this chapter.

It might be countered that the end of the training programme and the ceremonial 'signing off' is a significant event, which requires trainees to have demonstrated an understanding of basic police processes; the *formal* endorsement of competence. To recap, to be 'confirmed in post' trainees need to have completed a learning and assessment portfolio, demonstrating their proficiency in several basic 'police actions' and evidencing a set of behaviours as stipulated by the 'integrated

competency framework'. Therefore, on competition of the assessment portfolio, some form of metamorphosis should have occurred. This is true in part, but the picture is much more complex.

For instance, I was 'signed off' on both person searching and making arrests by my colleagues, considered competent enough for the requirements of the assessment portfolio. And yet, arguably, I had not demonstrated enough proficiency in these areas to meet either the formal organisational standards as dictated by policy and legislation, or the informal working understandings of when and how to initiate these processes in the field. I had simply practiced them a few times, under close direction and supervision. Neither the formal organisation nor the informal working group would have been able to trust that I could perform such actions proficiently and independently.

This feature of the training process arises, I suggest, because of the lack of organisational oversight from a formal training perspective given to the development of volunteer recruits in the field. As discussed in the last chapter, those in charge of schooling Specials and marking them on their performance are not necessarily trained as tutors, and may be more or less inclined to assist their volunteer charges depending on their motivations for being there. Some of the officers I worked with sought to go beyond the requirements of the assessment portfolio once they knew I had applied to join the regular ranks, extending my informal induction beyond the role envisaged for Specials by the organisation. Others were generally dismissive of the learning portfolio process itself, referring to the guiding document in which Specials' progress was recorded as the 'prolapse' (its' official title was the 'Special Constabulary Learning and Assessment Portfolio', which was often abbreviated to SCOLAP[19]).

When the learning portfolio is 'completed', in theory it should be ratified by someone from the local regular officer training department. But in reality, this process was more of a formality, a checking that all the boxes have been ticked, rather than a detailed assessment of the learning and understanding of the volunteer constable. As shared already, some regular officers may have ulterior motives for declaring that trainees are ready for independent patrol. If anyone had sought to drill down into my evidence or assess my practice in person, they would have found that my basic

[19] In their study of regular recruit training Constable and Smith (2015) observed how tutors and tutees referred to their guiding document as 'so crap', an equally dismissive take on SOLAP (abbreviated from Student Officer Learning and Assessment Portfolio), and reflecting their similar indifference to the recording requirements of the formal assessment process.

'policing actions' were perhaps not proficient enough to authorise me to patrol independently. I had a formal *administrative* competence, based on the collection of ticks, but not a formal working competence.

Returning to an assessment of my metamorphosis within the context of this study, because comparatively little time was available for me to be able to discern and develop my proficiency with cultural practices and perspectives, my informal competence was still in development, even where a formal sanctioning of my competence (as set by the organisation, but not necessary monitored) had almost been achieved. My initial socialisation journey would have continued, even after the training programme came to an end. However, as a means of determining the progression of my socialisation experience, what can be readily assessed is the extent to which I ascribed to the four tenets of police culture by the end of my training, weighing the influence of accumulated experiences in the field against the dominance of the operating ideology as the lens through which they should be interpreted. Such an undertaking is set out below.

But before I consider this cultural positioning, I will discuss a key dynamic through which I was further inducted into the policing world, bonding with colleagues but also learning how to cope with the demands of the role. I suggest that *humour* is both a mechanism for integration, but also a repository for cultural knowledge; both of which trainees can access, and in doing so, further assimilate themselves. But learning how to deploy it within the police environment requires learning its own set of working rules.

2. On in joking

In the previous chapter I discussed how trainees quickly recognised the import of humour as a key constituent of backstage interaction. Some trainees such as Nate and Bob professed their openness to the banter, feeling at ease with its prevalence and tone. These were the two trainees who managed to attain the most acceptance from their regular colleagues. In this section I will elaborate on this aspect of station life, a commonly occurring feature of my socialisation experience. I will

discuss the use of humour as an induction and bonding mechanism, but also discuss how officers use it as a cultural resource for coping. I suggest that it demands specific attention, as a key element of the socialisation process, because humour forms such an important role in sustaining team dynamics and processing police work. Whilst the distinctive features of the Special Constable role means that trainees may never be able to achieve a culturally grounded proficiency in how to resolve policing incidents on their own, they can at least demonstrate to others through shared humour that they appreciate what it means to be part of that working environment.

Bonding

Academic work on the uses of humour in policing is not extensive, but a collective of studies have explored this area, recognising its distinctive forms, and closely aligning these with elements of the occupational culture (Holdaway, 1988; McNulty, 1994; Charman, 2013; Gayadeen, and Phillips, 2016). The latter study especially draws heavily on wider sociological theorising about the 'functional' roles and importance of humour in workplace settings. Of particular import, they stress, is the use of humour as a socialisation mechanism. 'Humour in the policing profession' the authors explain, 'uses joke telling and other forms of comedic expression as a tool to form professional bonds among institutional actors…..Humour provides insight and maintains the realities of the policing profession, which builds cohesion among officers' (2016:3). Humour brings officers together, reinforcing occupational solidarity and collegiality, and promoting collective perspectives (Holdaway, 1988). It can also work as a vehicle for imparting common-sense knowledge and templates for action, in a similar way to the use of stories as a learning device, assisting recruits to make sense of their new environment (McNulty, 1994). Of course, the opposite is also true, however, in that humour can be exclusive and divisive, establishing cultural buffers between members of an organisation (Charman, 2013; Kurtz and Upton, 2018). Therefore, the extent to which I was included in this cultural practice as a Special will say a lot about the efforts others made to assist me in establishing membership within the organisation.

The extract below occurred relatively early on in the period under consideration in this chapter, following a conversation that I had with a team sergeant to introduce him to my project:

> *I affirmed that I was really enjoying being a Special so far, and that I felt that I was learning a lot all the time. He declared that it was good to have us in, and that that we could help him and the team out. He suggested that it was good practice as a Special to come in regularly, so the team could get to know us and that we could be 'in on the banter', becoming part of the team ourselves. He then apologised for me having to work with Douglas tonight, raising his voice in jest so that it carried over the cabinets to where Douglas was sat, and Douglas declared that he was sorry he had to work with me too.*

The intuitive association of being 'in on the banter' as a necessary component of integrating with others at the station is clearly a redolent one, not just to police culture scholars. This extract also highlights how the deprecating humour was already being transferred to me. Indeed, on a later shift I arrived to find two members of our team trying to decide on a nickname for me, touting K-9, Tooth Hurty, and Molar[20] as possible options. Whilst on another shift I returned to the station to find my car (a dilapidated Fiat Uno) jacked up off the ground on a wooden pallet with the sergeant mock-inspecting the tread depth on my tires.

One aspect of engaging in police humour that needs to be quickly appreciated is that it is targeted in a semi-personal way, a form of occupational hazing (Conti, 2009; Volti, 2012). Members of a team (and new members especially) need to be prepared to be derided and disparaged by their colleagues, and to handle this attention without taking offence. Here, I discuss this aspect of integration with another officer:

> *As we head back into town on the motorway we are talking about our current team, and I affirm that there's a really nice spread of people here. He agrees with me, and says that our current team is probably nicer than his old team. They could be pretty brutal, he affirms with a chuckle, and recalls how he and the other newbies were the butt of jokes for quite some time when they first came into the station. The older guys especially used to keep them on their toes. I surmise that it was probably pretty important to show that you were able to take it on the chin as a new officer, responding positively. He affirms this resolutely*

[20] At the time I wondered if this was also a play on 'mole' given my research project!

and explains that you wouldn't have been taken seriously by the others if you weren't prepared to show you could deal with it.

Such lessons on securing acceptance were readily digested, but the fact that they were extended to me as a Special, and that I too was the butt of jokes, demonstrates the willingness of regular officers to facilitate my integration along familiar lines of initiation.

Much of the humour initiated at my expense focussed on my status as a trainee, and my lack of experience and cultural astuteness. For instance, I was greatly teased one nightshift for stopping to speak to a homeless male who had requested that I do so, only to be swiftly ushered away by another officer who told me to pay him no attention and told the male to 'go away please and leave us alone'. The male was well known to officers in the station, and even though he had significant mental health and lifestyle issues, was afforded little sympathy. My 'greenness' in being willing to engage with him was much parodied by the team, in contrast to their disinterest. Another nightshift involved a significant amount of scaffolding-scanning across the city centre for a drunken student called 'Rolly', who had apparently found his way up there, somewhere, and was calling for assistance because he couldn't get down. The problem was that he didn't know where he was, and could only offer muddled directions (such as 'I think I'm near a dodgy Chinese'). After struggling to locate him for several hours, the two officers that I was with became sceptical:

As we drive Savea comments that he reckons it's Joey. I chime up from the backseat, offering that his name is actually Rolly. This brings a volley of laughter from Kahui and Savea, which I don't get. Kahui explains in between the chuckles that 'Joey' is the term they use for when someone is giving them false details. They find this pretty funny, and I have to concede this to them.

Not only was I out of step with the lingo, but I also had not yet cottoned on to what they already assumed, that the job was not genuine and would eventually come to nothing. My naivety on both fronts left me open to mockery.

However, as I spent more time in the station, I was able to demonstrate both my developing proficiency in performing policing actions, and my understanding of the team dynamics, through

the deployment of humour. On one occasion, I attended to an intoxicated assailant who had bitten half an ear off a bouncer. I took the lead in speaking to the witnesses and the victim, and was ready to arrest the male myself, without prompting, only to find that the officer I was crewed with had already done it. I jestingly declared afterwards that he 'had stolen my arrest' (a big cultural faux-pas where one officer takes the lead), which was received very well. On another occasion I jokingly chastised a colleague in front of the team for taking longer than me to take a witness statement, and another officer declared that I was becoming a 'real old sweat'.

As much as humour is important for encouraging solidarity and fraternity, part of the bonding process within the wider socialisation journey requires new members to know their place. As above, this can mean showing deference to others in terms of experience and maturity. But it can also mean understanding one's organisational classification and relative social standing (Gayadeen and Phillips, 2016). Within the context of being a Special, humour is used to reinforce occupational camaraderie, but also to delineate difference. For instance, take the comment offered in response to me suggesting that a rather long-legged officer take the front passenger seat in our car (usually occupied by me) as he hitched a lift with us back to our station: 'This is good, he jokes as we all climb in. He's already learnt to defer to the regulars!'. The example below is even better, highlighting the inclusivity and exclusivity with which regular officers relate to their Special colleagues:

> *On the ride back to custody, all of us in the van were subjected to repeated abuse from a drunken and antsy prisoner in the cage that had been arrested by another officer. One of his lines of thought was that we'd all lose our jobs because of our involvement in his illegal arrest. This was pressed upon us several times, interspersed with assurances that he would fuck us up when we opened the door at the other end, and regular proclamations that we were all fucking cunts. He can't lose his job, one of the officers said (referring to me). He's a volunteer. This instigated a volley of chuckles from all the officers in the van, including me. I don't think our man in the back even twigged, but it didn't matter. Later on, Ellis declared that it was the 'best comment of the night'.*

Coping

Whilst it is important to understand humour as an interpersonal dynamic amongst officers that affirms relationships and cohesiveness, it is just as important to understand how it is used to process the work environment. Humour conveys to novice members what others think about their job, especially the kinds of situations and people that they will come across, and the best ways to respond, in a very similar way to war stories and received wisdom. But above the content, police humour also sets a tone, or a rhythm, to police work. Its quick-fire, off-beat, unpredictable, condescending, and self-effacing nature keeps new members on their toes, never quite sure what is off limits, or where the next joke or prank will come from.[21] McNulty has suggested that in this way it prepares recruits for the pace of police work 'as a metronome', where officers need to switch between the mundane and the frantic without missing a beat (1994: 100).

Humour reaffirms the basic tenets of the occupational culture (Holdaway, 1988; Charman, 2013), sustaining the cynicism, isolationism, and frustration that officers feel, whilst allowing them to celebrate those rare moments of masculine exploits or crime-fighting encounters. The subjects of policing, whether they be suspects, victims, or witnesses, and the situations in which they are encountered, are all fair game for joking where they support those kernel ingredients. For the new member who has yet to gather much experience of police work, humour sets expectations in advance of actual exposure in line with these cultural tropes, as well as suggesting the necessary approaches for handling some of its challenges. In this way it helps trainees to cope with the confusion of their new environment, revealing the bounds of the role as socially constructed by experienced officers (Holdaway, 1988).

Humour reduces tension in workplaces prone to stressful experiences (see Charman, 2013). It allows group members to process such demands by normalising events, and by creating distance. This is especially the case when dealing with death and trauma. Experienced members show the newly initiated how to work through such situations. The following example shows how I encountered this at my first 'sudden death' incident (a rather sad scene involving a naked, scabies-ridden heroin user

[21] Woe betide the officer who leaves their pocket notebook unattended for instance, in case they return to find it cellotaped to the ceiling, annotated with penises, or stapled full of photographs of Susan Boyle……

who had died from a suspected overdose), when two officers from CID came down to the sheltered accommodation unit to inspect the deceased:

> *The two CID ladies look over the body, seemingly unaffected by the presence of death/absence of life. One of them makes a disinterested joke about how she saw one recently with his lips drawn up and teeth exposed, with his hands tucked up on his chest, pulling the pose herself to show how he looked like a hamster……Before they leave, the other one declares that it's really hot down here in these bedsits, and opines with a disparaging smirk that it won't be this lot that pay for the heating bills will it, and her colleague laughs.*

In keeping with the literature that posits a spread of cultural formations within different areas of policing (Fielding, 1988), albeit centred on the same enduring themes (Loftus, 2010), it is likely that humour was used as an interpretive and affirmational tool within the criminal investigations department with its own particular slant, and that this was on show in this example. This is based on the occupational reality that such officers tend to deal directly with the more traumatic aspects of policing (death, serious violence, sexual assault, child abuse) on a much more frequent basis. Indeed, some studies have sought to explore humour as a coping strategy within specific investigative departments, such as Burns et al's. focus on an online child exploitation team (2008). However, such dark jesting was also broadly typical of response officers when faced with such situations, although perhaps not offered so immediately. Following on from my first experience of confronting the corporeal reality of death, one officer wondered facetiously whether I threw up over the body. And returning to the previous stage in my socialisation, another officer put this functional aspect to me rather bluntly on one of my first shifts, reflecting on the catharsis found in grisly banter:

> *Back in the station, we chat to Mehrtens and Cowan. They have just returned from having to deal with a sudden death. Mehrtens relays that the deceased was already going purple when they got there and that he had to stand by the body for two hours. Cowan returns with a laugh that the man got increasingly purpler throughout their wait. He then turns to me and says (somewhat tersely) that he's not going to apologise for morbid humour, because it's just how they are, and if I don't like it I'll probably need to leave, because they won't*

change to accommodate anyone who can't take it. It's just how we deal with things, he affirms. I tell him that I am fine with it, and that he won't need to worry.

Whilst I found the experience of the sudden death incident challenging, although not overly affecting, I took my lead from those around me as to how to process the experience – as a matter-of-fact occurrence, part of daily business – using humour as a normalising technique. However, officers also understand the resourcefulness of humour as a distancing technique, deflecting and dismissing the negativities of facing confrontation and abuse (Gayadeen and Phillips, 2016). To explore this here, and my tentative engagement in such practice, I need to set a scene.

Along with several other officers from our team, I responded to reports from CCTV operators of a male attacking a woman on a park bench. It was roughly 1600 hours. On arrival both parties were considerably inebriated, and the male was swiftly arrested. However, the female 'Clara', his partner, became extremely agitated and belligerent after this and was eventually arrested for a being drunk and disorderly, having been given several opportunities to desist, instead continuing to swear and threaten to assault us. At the custody unit I was charged with remaining with her as her partner was fighting and took six officers to get him into a cell. As we spent more time together, she became increasingly aggressive, threatening me, and every other officer she came into contact with. But she also started to divulge the depths of her general despair, revealing mental health problems, substance abuse, domestic violence, and family tragedy as contributing factors to her current state of being. When presented to the custody sergeant her abuse of one officer became very personal, and she began to racially abuse him as well as taunting him on his weight. She eventually needed to be carried into a cell and pinned to the floor so that the handcuffs could be removed, with me having to play an active role in this. It was one of the first times that I was involved in dealing with serious confrontation and hostility, and I found the incident exhausting and disorientating. This was in marked contrast to the others who were clearly exasperated by the woman's behaviour, but remained jocund:

After the cell door is shut, the five of us walk back towards the office behind the custody booths. I feel a little light headed as I pull off my disposable gloves and toss them in the bin along with the others. Savea and the custody sergeant share a chuckle about what a pleasant lady she was. They seem quite jovial and unphased, but I feel a little rocked and

unsteady for a few moments, unable to drop out of the intensity of the struggle quite so quickly, and because I feel that some of it could have been handled differently perhaps.

What I had registered as unsatisfactory about our collective response to the incident was the lack of patience and tolerance shown to Clara, and the manner in which some officers interacted with her, which bordered on baiting, as they repeated the threats and insults that she issued with disinterest, deflecting the abuse but antagonising her further. And yet she was extremely unpleasant, notwithstanding her obvious vulnerabilities, and represented a very credible threat of violence, which I struggled to cope with. It should also be noted, however, that I found myself amused by her declarations of sobriety and the choiceness of her language at times, at one point having to turn away from her to stifle a laugh.

This incident is especially pertinent to this topic because of what happened during our ride together back to the police station.

It's now over an hour and half after the shift was supposed to finish. We discuss Clara and her personalised abuse of Savea, which we all find quite funny **[She had repeatedly called him a 'fat cunt', which was quite unfair].** *I find myself coming round into it again, but still a little phased by the whole experience, still trying to readjust. In an attempt to pull myself into the moment, I jokingly ask them whether they would rather kiss Clara or Susie (the plump peroxided shop lifter who we dealt with earlier in the shift) if they had to choose one; a sometimes-deployed line of (admittedly puerile and debased) humour used between officers (although not usually used in such circumstances as these [And on reflection, very out of place]). Savea chuckles away, extending the joke along similar lines. I feel as though I'm almost trying to force myself to that level, aware of its' inappropriateness, and yet willing to bypass such checks. Or to try to at least; perhaps to try and outwardly demonstrate that I'm okay with everything that happened, to fit in with these guys because they seem to be.*

The critical reflection in the fieldnotes captures the issues at play here. It is clear that the other officers were desensitised to the personalised abuse and threat of aggression in a way that I was not yet, having confronted similar situations hundreds of times before. Humour was a familiar tool

to distance and disassociate from what would otherwise feel like a very personal experience. Humorous debriefs after such testing citizen encounters are a routine practice to acknowledge and reduce frustrations (Gayadeen and Phillips, 2016) and maintain social distance between 'us and them' (Charman, 2013). By this stage in my socialisation journey I had recognised this, and attempted to initiate such a process myself, exploring the bounds of acceptability and appropriateness, and in doing so registering my affiliation with my experienced colleagues. But the alien circumstances of the situation, its physicality and hostility, and the approach that some officers adopted in response represented a heady mix that was difficult to process. And as the fieldnotes reveal, I was not yet able to fully resolve this through the culturally ascribed functions of humour.

3. A special kind of metamorphosis

It is during the stage of metamorphosis, Van Maanen asserts, that the 'job-related attitudes of the recruits begin to approximate those of their more experienced colleagues' (1975: 223). Such approximation can represent a major shift in the dispositions and values of the new member, including significant perceptual, attitudinal, and physical changes as they respond to their new environment and acquire the techniques and perspective to ensure their ongoing survival within the organisation (Chan, 2001). In this section I will attempt to explicate some of the changes that I underwent by the end of the training programme and consider the extent to which I was 'socialised' by my experiences as a Special. To do this I will examine the four kernel elements of police culture in turn and consider my eventual positioning against each one. It will be important to assess the degree to which my experiences of police work substantiated these fundamental tenets, and to explore any disparities that occurred.

A masculine ethos

The masculine ethos of police culture is one of its most controversial elements, tied inextricably to the application of force and coercive measures. But it also covers officers' general disposition

towards the anticipation and celebration of danger and risk, linking in to a culturally sustained reverence for such elements that does not reflect the general conditions of the working environment. My experiences in this regard highlighted the relative infrequency of engaging in actively confrontational or physically threatening situations. Including shifts also undertaken in the 'encounter' stage, only 7 out of total 36 shifts involved situations that required me to use force or evasive measures[22] in situations of active resistance. But the number of shifts where a risk element presented in the behaviour of others, which required me to react accordingly was much greater, numbering 20.

In terms of my general approach to meeting confrontation and aggression, or even just drunken unpredictability, as I accumulated more encounters during the period under consideration in this chapter, my practice shifted in line with the general cautiousness and wariness that I often saw demonstrated by regular officers, coupled with an assertiveness that attempted to establish rules for interaction on the officers' terms. Repeat interactions with the same individual at different stages of my training reveal this feature. When I first met 'Matilda' (an alcoholic, drug-addicted sex worker, who was known to be HIV positive) she was reporting a robbery, although the circumstances transpired to be somewhat different. She was very difficult to engage with, slurring, slobbering, crying, and pacing up and down. In our debrief of the incident, my colleague cautioned me for getting too close to her, considering her erratic nature, contamination risk, and warning markers for assaulting police officers, and I reflected on the distance he had maintained. When I encountered her again in a very similar state but this time causing a disturbance in the police station front office, I was much more guarded in her presence, and also more effective at managing her behaviour.

As alluded to above in my discussion of the incident involving Clara, being involved in situations of active resistance which required the application of coercive measures was initially a very disorientating thing to experience. I did not take naturally to the 'dirty work' of policing (Hughes, 1962). The mandate to apply coercive measures is often recognised as the defining characteristic of policing (Waddington, 1999), but it is one that can generate moral ambiguity and unstable occupational identities (Muir, 1977). This is because it is an inherently isolating and demeaning activity, imbued with uncertainty, and carrying the risks of censure and sanction. And yet coercive

[22] On one occasion I had to jump back from a cell doorway to avoid being spat at.

measures are 'celebrated' within the cult of masculinity, underscoring the police identity of heroic crime-fighter, who only ever uses force against those who deserve it (Dick, 2005). Added to this is the often frenetic, turbulent nature of the situations in which it occurs, sometimes without warning, and with the real threat of violence and assault (to be addressed below). Confronted with such a raft of confusing considerations, it would be readily understandable for a trainee to heavily lean on experienced colleagues for guiding principles in this arena (Van Maanen, 1975; Fielding, 1988).

However, as I grew into my surroundings, I found myself critically reflecting on how colleagues used physically coercive measures to effect control over certain situations. Whilst stopping short of being unreasonable, and therefore excessive and unlawful, I sometimes wondered whether officers' choice of coercive tactics lacked patience or foresight, badged as pre-emptive and/or defensive, potentially inflaming the situations at hand. Such was the case when I watched as officers quickly bundled a man, arrested for breaching his ASBO, into the back of a van when he started to become somewhat obstinate, resulting in one officer getting kicked to the chest as he tried to slam the door shut. My assessment of the threat potentially posed by such individuals rarely matched that of other officers, and thus suggest to me as appropriate the kinds of actions that were deployed by them. It may be countered that this was a product of my underdeveloped capacity to properly make such assessments, considering my lack of experience at handling confrontation and aggression. I return to this below. What is important to acknowledge here is that I was able to establish a distinct position on such matters rather than accepting practice on face value. Although I never directly challenged or questioned the approach that other officers decided to take (as the literature suggests is often the norm for police recruits – Chan, 2003), I was able to demonstrate some agency in my decision-making in this regard. The following example is pertinent here.

Following my arrest of a female for 'going equipped' (Section 25 of the Theft Act 1968) as directed by my colleague, I was also directed to place her in handcuffs. I reflected on a previous incident in which I had placed handcuffs on a female shoplifter as directed, after also being directed to arrest her first, and which I felt somewhat unsure of at the time (she was probably close to 60 and reduced to tears following her arrest, although she had purportedly been causing a disturbance prior to our arrival). I decided not to do so on this occasion, trusting my instinct that the female in question would be compliant. My colleague seemed initially sceptical but left the decision with me. It turned out to be sound. I was well-aware of the stock cultural response of handcuffing arrested persons as

a typical example of an anxiety avoidance strategy, but felt confident enough to challenge it here. Having my judgement affirmed through her behaviour felt very positive.

However, the following example, towards the end of my training, shows I was still critically assessing the practice of others in this regard, but also realigning my perspectives. 'Daryl' had been detained and searched after reports of his involvement in a large fight, and was subsequently arrested when suspected cocaine sachets were found in his pocket. Although initially calm and compliant, on route to custody he started to headbutt the insides of the van cage and threaten officers:

> *As we pull up at custody there is talk of a welcome party, but the arresting officer seems content to try and get Daryl out without one first. The door is opened, and Daryl stands there topless and tensing. The arresting officer steps up and tells him to come out and stop being an idiot. Everyone is tense, waiting to see how he'll react. When he does step down, nodding his head and flaring his nostrils, I step forward and take his other arm, keen to show people that I'm not scared to get involved. Everyone else is lined up around us, ready to step in. Someone goes ahead and opens the door to the holding cell. Daryl is tensing against us but he's coming, slowly. As we approach the door he slows down to a pause and laughs with a bit of menace, as if the taunt the arresting officer who's trying to get him to hurry up. I think we could wait him out for a few seconds and then get him to come along eventually but another officer pushes him forward from behind. He takes this as a cue to kick off, pushing back against them and leaning from side to side, and within a couple of seconds we are all rolling around on the floor. It's happens before I really know what's going on. Someone gets hold of his legs. I now have his left arm and am at his face as he lies in the doorway, half in, half out. The intensity has immediately ramped up as he struggles against us on the floor. Other officers appear from inside the station and try to get involved, drawn out by the commotion. He is lying on top of the cuffs and refusing to roll over, swearing at us to get off him with veins bulging out on the side of his face. I am trying to talk to him and telling him to relax. At one stage, after a few moments of struggle, he appears to do so, and I say that if he calms down, we can sit him up and do this sensibly without hurting him. 'Alright, alright' he says with a grimace. I turn to the others and I say 'okay, he's going to sit up. He's going to sit up'. But the arresting officer curtly replies 'no he's not', and proceeds to lift him backwards into the holding bay. I feel quite dismissed, especially when Slipper supports the*

arresting officer, telling me he's had his chance. I did genuinely think that he would have come quietly then, or at least a bit quieter, at least in a way that would have been more manageable. Daryl is then flipped onto his back and it transpires that he's actually bent the cuffs from resisting against them, so they need to come off, which is no mean feat considering his size and strength. There are probably five of us on him now, trying to maintain control as the cuffs are swapped. He cries out as his wrist are contorted and continues to nash his teeth and snarl. It's pretty intense stuff. The custody sergeant comes out to see what's happening and declares that he can go straight into the cell. And so he gets hoisted to his feet and myself and the arresting officer take an arm each and walk him edgily through the maze of corridors to the cell where the sergeant is waiting with the door open. He comes reasonably quietly here, still puffing out and grimacing, but walking with us at least.

Inside the cell the mat is on the floor and Daryl gets placed face down upon it. I'm hopeful that he's going to calm down a bit but he starts to resist again once officers take off his shoes and pull down his trousers to check for more drugs, and starts shouting out again and trying to fight back. It gets very hot in there very quickly and I can soon feel a sweat beading on my brow. I am on an arm which I'm given to hold once the cuff comes off, and need to be told by several of the officers present how to bend the wrist properly in the right pain compliance technique, all of them noting my inexperience no doubt. But they do so constructively, considering the frantic situation. At one stage I almost lose his arm and have to really struggle to regain control of it, desperate not to lose face in front of everyone. I am one of the first out as the cell extraction process unfolds and when everything is done, and the door is finally slammed shut, we stand around in the corridor for a moment and listen to Daryl jump to his feet and start pounding the metal door. I am really sweaty now and start to mop my brow. Some of the others look at me with mild concern, and the custody sergeant smiles supportively and asks if I'm alright. I feel fine, and strangely comfortable with what just happened (at least with having to play an active role in things once they proceeded – I still think it could potentially have been avoided if we'd refused to get riled up by him in the first place). I nod and laugh, and offer that I can see why they trained us to do that now. Everyone amasses in the custody office and we watch the screen for Daryl's cell. He has

taken all his clothes off besides his pants and is preening in front of the camera, tensing his muscles and shouting out taunts. Everyone laughs at him disparagingly, including the DOs who have come to watch. We stay in there for a couple of moments before Douglas suddenly realises that there's another prisoner still in the van which we've all forgotten about! We quickly head back out and help the arresting officer to open the doors and get him out, but he is completely fine, and we soon drive back towards the centre…….

On the way out we talk about Daryl again. He didn't look particularly problematic when we first picked him up, did he? Slipper reflects. He was quite passive until he got in the cage and started to bang his head on the side. But he was quite a handful at the other end. Once you've seen a few of those situations play themselves out it changes your perception of how people might react, and it makes you more wary in the future. He shrugs, as if this is just an inevitable truth that everyone (every copper at least) comes to realise in time. That's why I always put handcuffs on people now, he continues along a similar vein, unless it's a little old lady. If they complain you can say to them 'I don't know how you're going to react, do I? I've never met you before.' And you can tell them that we'll end up looking pretty stupid if we have to chase after them because they've pissed off, he says, and they can't argue with that!

I certainly see more merit in this than I did when I first started, when I felt the need to question every use of force more rigorously. I still think there becomes an automatic move towards generalised justifications for using force, especially cuffing, which I haven't wholly accepted yet, and maybe never will considering my propensity to (over?)think things through, and my championing of what I consider to be important values. But the realities of the job, and the experiences I've had so far, have certainly reconfigured my sense of how to do things. Basically, what I'm trying to say is that the decision to put on cuffs is a lot easier for me now than it first was!

This passage is worth relaying in its entirety, I contend, because of its pertinence on several fronts. Here was a very violent individual, who was processed in a stock manner by officers (using a relatively high level of force) because of the potential risk he posed, rather than attempt a more patient approach, which suggested itself to me. The employment of this stock manner was even recognised as being founded in officers' previous experiences of such situations. Whilst the passage

reveals that this was not yet my initial position, I did not hesitate from actively involving myself in the process, and even recognised that by doing so I was demonstrating my general affiliation and acceptance (but also revealing my inexperience!). The ensuing discussion and my reflections on handcuffing also speak to my growing acceptance of standardised considerations for applying the use of force (although not completely), which I linked to my expanding experiences of police work, endorsing the operating ideology.

This perspective change was even strengthened two shifts later, on one of my last duties as a Special, where I was punched in the face. The experience of being assaulted myself felt like another informal 'rite of passage', and was referenced in similar ways by my colleague (Conti, 2009). It was very close to the end of a long night shift (approaching 0700 am) as we responded to CCTV reports of males fighting in the street. On arrival only one was still present, will a bloodied mouth, and seemingly disorientated. A seventeen-year-old boy of diminutive stature, he admitted to being lost and high on drugs. Our initial intention was simply to get him home, considering the time. As I tried to engage him, without any warning, he turned around and struck me, landing a fist onto the bride of my nose:

> *I immediately felt wronged, and for a split second I wasn't sure what to do. Then I suddenly found myself on the floor with him, rolling him onto his front and pinning an arm behind his back, telling him he was under arrest and spitting out the caution as I knelled on his back. I was pretty livid. No-one has ever attacked me so brazenly, especially not when I've done nothing to remotely provoke them, and when I've been trying to provide them succour in the first place. Part of me wanted to push his face into the concrete, to twist his arm back even further, and it took a few moments for me to regain my composure and advise him to calm down as he wrestled against us, and ask him for his name. Douglas had to tell me to move my knee off his spine, so caught up was I in the swirl of physical and mental stimuli. My nose was hurting and my pride was too. The other officers quickly came in after we had hit the ground, taking hold of his legs and helping Douglas get the cuffs onto his wrists……*
>
> *At custody I took him from the van myself, purposefully, wanting possession of my prisoner, but happy that I was composed enough and could rise above the personal nature of the offence to deal with the booking in process competently. But when he kicked off again in the holding bay I sat him down on his arse, inadvertently knocking his head on the wall as he*

thrashed about, but not feeling guilty about it. It was his fault. He was the one being a prick. When the call was made to carry him through to the cell, I took the lead again, taking him by the arms with little immediate concern for how it felt. Obviously if I knew I was doing damage I'd have stopped. But this was just awkwardness and some force, and he could bloody well put up with it. My heart was pounding again and the sweat came through. I felt powerful and competent, like I knew what I was doing, like I could deal with people like this, dragging him through to the cell.

I was not sure initially how much of these fieldnotes I felt comfortable sharing, but I think it is important to confront these issues with openness and honesty. This is surely one of the analytical benefits of autoethnography in that it provides very direct, redolent data on the phenomenon under study. The impact of the experience on my personal practice immediately following the assault was clear to see, where my use of force was unconstrained by the concerns registered previously, instinctual reactions applied to the behaviour at hand; not excessive but not applied with excessive concern for his welfare either. The feelings of power and purposefulness issued from a growing familiarity with this type of action, and its deployment here considering the offence committed. Although when we got into the cell to initiate the extraction it was clear that I still did not know what I was doing, and I showed my inexperience with the process again.

These reflections demonstrate the challenge to remain measured and composed when dealing directly with physical assaults, and hopefully capture a sense of the heady nature of such incidents. Analysis of police use of force should engage with these experiential features of the working environment, I contend, if it is to obtain any meaningful insight into cultural practice and perspectives. Following the shift, I engaged in much critical reviewing of my actions before and after being assaulted, and wondered what impact the incident might have on me going forward:

What have I taken away from this encounter then? It was a harsh lesson to learn. The next time someone admits to being fucked off their face on ketamine I'll probably take more of a backwards step, watch them all the more carefully, keep them at arm's length. He was the first person to actually attack me, and in a way he's shown up a failing of mine, a mistaken approach to dealing with people. He's basically thrown my strategy into doubt. Could I have prevented this? Probably, had I been more cautious, more wary. My threat assessment

wasn't good enough, and I couldn't react in time to rectify it. I'll need to adapt, if I want to avoid getting punched in the face again. I'm sure the effects of this will be felt in other areas too, in the way I deal with people in other contexts. I thought I'd handled overt aggression, overt danger, quite well thus far, remaining safe, unhurt. But this was danger that I didn't even register, and so how do I cope with that? Do I get better at registering danger, or do I just be more cautious with everyone to cover all bases? As we approached the location of the fight having been directed in by comms I could feel my heart beating fast. The CCTV operator was worried about the confrontations, I could tell from her voice. And we were only two officers. But I wasn't scared. I was anxious, but a little excited also. I wasn't excited anymore when we'd put him in the van and were driving off to custody.

McNulty has stressed the importance for recruits in being able to demonstrate a cultural appreciation of the danger and risk in police work to experienced colleagues, suggesting it is one of the key barometers for effective socialisation (1994: ch.6). Within this, recruits need to understand uncertainty as background condition of all police work, and address their behaviour accordingly. The literature on police socialisation suggests that this is often achieved through the replication of standardised cultural working practices that are handed down as tried-and-tested methods for reducing the potential for negative experiences (Van Maanen, 1975; Chan, 2003). My reflections at the end of my final shift were interpreted within the collective body of experience as another example of the unpredictability of physical threats, and the need to always remain vigilant and precautionary. This was an attitude I had seen and heard espoused many times. But it took an incident in which I was caught underprepared to draw me towards the communal disposition towards defensiveness, not just in like situations, but promoting anxiety avoidance across every aspect of the role.

Cynicism

Whilst cynical or pessimistic were not terms that I would have used to describe myself as I approached the end of my training, my experiences as a Special certainly encouraged a sceptical realism that I did not have before, and a much richer picture of how the police role is received across

society. This was founded in first hand encounters with members of the public, as I began to collate my own examples to weigh against the cultural profiling espoused by colleagues. I amassed several working examples of being lied to, where people either conspired to provide false details, downplay or deny their involvement in an incident, or tell us blatant untruths. In the beginning I would feel surprised and personally aggrieved at this, but later fell into a relaxed acceptance of it (Manning, 2005). I also met several people with very low opinions of the police, some of whom would bait and taunt us, whilst others would spit at us and/or try to assault us. And I also met those who were generally unappreciative or excessively demanding:

> *Before we had finished issuing the cannabis warning to the young man, a woman came to Kahui's car window and asked if we had come to remove the burnt-out car behind some police tape that we can see ahead of us. Kahui declared to her that we were dealing with something else and don't know anything about it. She ranted that she had had to drive around the road the other day, not realising it was blocked, and that this had cost her ten minutes, which she considered 'outrageous'. I had to struggle to stifle an outburst of laughter at this, and we shook our heads when she disappeared. Kahui relayed that he would look into it and see if he could find out what was going on. He is still talking me through how we handled the incident when she returns to the car window and wants to know if we've found out when it's being moved yet. He returns that he hasn't because he's still busy, being shorter with her this time. I'll come and tell you what's going on when I find out, he declares. A few minutes later a couple of kids come up to his side and wonder what the tape is for, much more politely than the lady, out of curiosity opposed to any expectation of action. However, he dismisses them relatively bluntly, declaring that he doesn't know, that he's not dealing with the job. They retreat, no doubt feeling a little scorned (I would have done), and unlikely to think of the police as especially friendly.*

This interaction is worth recalling because it shows how I encountered the type of behaviour so derided by frontline officers, and responded to it as such myself. However, the officer's reaction to the subsequent enquiry revealed a terseness in his response to members of the public which did not reflect my position on how people should be spoken to, and thus the relationship to the public that I was fostering as I collated interactive experiences.

Cynicism in police culture is pervasive because the work itself exposes officers to so much that is distressing and depressing about society and the human condition (Loftus, 2010). Throughout my training I encountered numerous victims of interpersonal violence, witnessing first-hand the bodily affects and accompanying upset of actual and grievous levels of harm, and the destructive dispositions that gave rise to it. In a similar way I had depressing encounters with the impacts of domestic and sexual violence, experienced mainly through dealing with the victims. I was also frequently exposed to victims of substance abuse and other indicators of social depravation, feeling intense sadness at their plight sometimes, and yet also wary of their unpredictability and general distrust of police officers. These encounters and insights conditioned my outlook with a grounded realism. But to what extent did I change my approach to dealing with people as a result of these insights and experiences? To what extent did my outlook coincide with those regular colleagues who had been exposed to all this to a much greater extent?

The picture here is not clear cut. Reviewing my fieldnotes it is apparent that I generally sought to treat people with civility and empathy through to the end of my training, irrespective of their circumstances or reasons for our interactions, even where I could have taken a lead from colleagues who were not necessarily doing so. My cynicism was not as deep-rooted as theirs, reflected in the way they sometimes engaged with people. This was recognised on both sides, but so too was the acknowledgement that I had undergone a change in perspective:

> *Back at the station I chat to Cane about the night shift, declaring that it was good for me to experience the NTE environment, without having to deal with anything overly demanding, but still kept on my toes. She listens in interestedly, smiling with a beleaguered familiarity at the experiences I relay. She admits with a chuckle that her and Douglas were talking about me the other night when they were crewed together, and debated whether or not they thought I would move right of centre like the rest of them after a few years in the job. Douglas laughs at this too, admitting the discussion. He declares that he's already noticed a change in my attitude to people since I first came in, claiming that I'm more dismissive of some people than I was when I started*.

As we will see below in the section on *us/them*, my experiences did sometimes provoke negative and disparaging reactions to certain individuals, even when they presented with multiple

vulnerabilities. Still, I affirm that I sought to treat them with fairness and responsiveness, although as below, this was informed by a growing pragmatism on how to handle the often-accompanying disruptive behaviour.

That my outlook was not yet fully aligned with regular colleagues, I suggest, was due in part to several reasons. Firstly, my fleeting visits to their world provided me respite from the routine exposure to societal ills and ill behaviour that typified much of their working existence. Secondly, most of my colleagues had worked from city centre stations for several years and had extensive histories of dealing with taxing, traumatic and tiresome situations, whereas I had the opposite. Thirdly, I also had the advantage of being removed from the routine reinforcement of cultural perspectives that occurs among those who work together day in, day out (Holdaway, 1983; Waddington, 1999). Even where situations were encountered that bucked the trend, these would have been interpreted as anomalies against the collective wisdom of cultural experience, and dismissed as such (Chan, 2003).

It should also be noted, however, that my later shifts contained plenty of reflection on the futility of trying to reason or positively engage with some people, and the realisation that further experience would likely bring me more in line with the general position in some situations:

> *The more I deal with very drunk and hostile people, the more I can see why officers roll their eyes, why they sometimes don't bother engaging, and why they can be quite short with them. I used to think this was a negative trait, but I now think it's almost an inevitability that it will happen with time and repeated exposure to these types of people. This dawned on me as I attempted to reason with a very drunk and belligerent man in the holding cells before going through to the custody desk. I kept trying to explain why we had travelled to the station we had (the others were all full) and why he had been arrested (for affray, but not by us). The other officers present just looked on wearily, occasionally adding something in the hope it might be absorbed, but not particularly inclined to engage. And fair play. He was a broken record, and all my protestations and explanations came to nothing. He wanted to argue and hassle all the way to the cell over an hour later. I'm not saying that the best way is to just switch off and ignore people, and I don't see officers do this completely. But*

sometimes there is just no point trying to get through, and working this out and accepting it is going to be a feature of the role I'll wager. In fact, it's already becoming a feature I think.

Us/them

This tenet of police culture incorporates the occupational perspectives of solidarity and togetherness, which have been recognised as some of the more positive aspects of police culture, encouraging mutual support and camaraderie to help process the challenges of the working environment (Chan, 1996; Chan, 2003; Skolnick, 2008). But this tenet also stands for the isolationism and separatism that officers feel on several fronts; from members of the public in general, to specific social/community groupings, and from other actors within the criminal justice system, including colleagues from other departments (Loftus, 2010).

As I neared the end of my training, it was clear that I had aligned myself on several fronts with my regular officer colleagues, whilst always been conscious of the social capital disparity between us. This was not just a case of learning how to think or act like them in response to certain stimuli, but also a case of how to assume the corporal presence of policing and enhanced symbolic control (Holdaway, 1983). One of the ways in which this manifested itself was learning to move like them, taking a lead from colleagues on how to impose myself in different environments, and how to use the uniform to differentiate me from the other people. Here, I reflect on patrolling the city centre on a busy Saturday night:

As we go, I'm getting more and more comfortable being around people in my uniform in this environment now. I find that I try to hold more presence on the street than I would if I weren't wearing the uniform, not looking to shoulder people, but giving them the opportunity to step out of my way, rather than vice versa, even if they're quite a bit bigger than me. I suppose this sense of empowerment comes from a feeling that I need to act the part, which means physically imposing myself within the landscape, even when nobody is being threatening or confrontational. I'm not sure what would happen if someone decided not to accede, as they would be perfectly entitled to do, and instead walked into me and knocked me over…

Not only was I learning to walk like them, but I was also learning to talk like them, picking up on the lingo and jargon, and when to apply it properly. As the fieldnotes reveal, arrested persons were 'prisoners' not 'detainees' or 'suspects' (Holdaway, 1983: 27), and some subjects of police attention were 'shits' or 'shitbags':

> *At one stage I see a crappy old car with a group of young guys inside coming out of a car park and I remark to Kahui 'Look at that car of shitbags' with my tongue in my cheek (although there was the semblance of mischief about the vehicle and its' inhabitants). He laughs at this, and jokingly exclaims that he's impressed with the way I'm starting to think.*

It is widely acknowledged that using stock phrases to describe the subjects of police work is part of a strategy for establishing distance and moral superiority (Van Maanen, 1978; Waddington, 1999; Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2009). I have mentioned above that whilst I perhaps became more dismissive of certain individuals, or fatigued by some citizen encounters, this had not yet matched the pervasive cynicism of regular colleagues, and the impact this sometimes had on their actions. But in backstage interactions, I was not afraid to sometimes offer my candid character assessments, displaying an acknowledgement of this cultural distancing aspect. The below remarks record a conversation with a colleague after we had dealt with 'Matilda' at the station; my second encounter with her:

> *On the way back upstairs, I recall my previous meeting with Matilda to Cowan, who nods along interestedly with a knowing smile. I find that I'm quite disparaging in how I describe the 'incident' to Cowan, perhaps wanting to demonstrate my lack of sympathy/distaste for her and thus show my common orientation with how she is perceived by others.*

Reviewing these reflections does not make me feel particularly proud, but they speak very revealingly on the dynamics of socialisation. Not only had my impressions of her aligned with colleagues (not the case when I first encountered her), I recognised that by acknowledging this common feeling of distance that I could demonstrate my affiliation with their outlook, and thus promote my integration.

However, as referenced above in the discussion of cynicism, and linking back to the section on humour, my feelings towards members of the public and the ways in which they should be treated were sometimes out of step with the attitudes and subsequent actions that I ascribed to my colleagues, and the social distancing that was evident in both. 'Community engagement' which seemed to dismiss or diminish the obvious vulnerability of the individuals encountered was an area that was met with critical reflection and rejection of certain practices models.

The following extract captures such an incident. Here, a call to police was interpreted by our dispatchers as a male trapped under a car, a significant emergency incident which initiated a rapid response from several units:

> *Carter is shouting from up the street, and so I follow his calls. He is shouting to Douglas, saying 'I've got him, I've got him mate'. I break into a run, catching up to McCabe and we reach the car. However, as we get there it is pretty obvious now that there is nothing quite as dramatic happening as we had all envisaged to be taking place. Carter and Ellis are standing around calmly, catching their breath. We all do the same. There is a man on the phone nearby who appears to be the caller, but he now looks slightly sheepish. I'm a bit confused, but it soon transpires that there is a man under the car. Carter is trying to coax him out. He eventually gets pretty much dragged out by Ellis and Douglas. We stand him up and crowd round him, everyone asking questions and trying to work out what's going on. The tone of the officers is pretty demanding, if not demeaning/imposing. There appears to be an obvious suspicion to start with from all that he was under the car because he was hiding from someone, perhaps having done something necessitating this. The guy is shaking badly. He looks confused and shell-shocked, and doesn't appear to know who to respond to. Carter soon cancels the ambulance called out to assist, declaring dismissively that the guy is fine. It's already arrived through, and drives passed us waving. I try to ask the guy some questions when it becomes clear that no-one else is really clarifying things, however I am equally unsuccessful. It is obvious (to me at least) that he has some potentially serious mental health issues, displaying signs of paranoid schizophrenia as he claims to have been chased by a jeep and openly declares that someone is talking in his ear (although not in his head, he clarifies). He wants to see someone about it, he claims, and wants us to help him. He reacts defensively to the questioning of one officer, clearly feeling somewhat threatened*

by the presence of so many uniformed bodies crowding round him, and this officer becomes almost belligerent with him. He declares that he doesn't want to deal with him, and the officer responds in kind, suggesting that he is wasting all our time seeing as we were called out to deal with what we thought was a serious incident, only to find him hiding under a car.

After about five minutes, he is eventually sent on his way……I suggest to the others that he was displaying obvious signs of mental illness, citing paranoid schizophrenia, but I pose this more as an observation than a suggestion that we need to do anything about it (because I don't want to sound above my station). I have been slightly surprised by the lack of consideration/sympathy for his clearly distressful situation/condition. Both Carter and Ellis acknowledge that I'm probably right as we watch him walk away, but only do so with muted shrugs, and I wonder to what extent they picked up on the potential seriousness of the symptoms I saw. Douglas has prior knowledge of his current situation and affirms that the people from his housing project had suggested that he was having issues, but relays that when the mental health assessment team was called out to see him he refused to co-operate. The others all shrug again, as if there's nothing more we can do. When he was being quite roughly questioned by the others I had wanted to step in, take him aside to a quieter spot and try to get to the bottom of things one-on-one, rather than leave him in what seemed to me to be quite an intimidatory situation. But I didn't and now he's gone.

This was not the only incident where I witnessed officers dealing with people with mental health needs with what I assessed to be a lack of understanding and an accompanying insensitivity. In some cases, it was bluntness that I objected to, whereas in others it was closer to rudeness. It should also be noted, however, that most of the officers I worked with responded to mental health matters with empathy and compassion, even if some of them expressed something different as their general disposition to this area of practice when discussing mental health in backstage settings.

I may have noticed this especially having worked in the mental health sector prior to my training, and so was potentially more aware of some of the pertinent issues and effective communication strategies than my regular colleagues. And to this extent it may be unfair to be overtly critical of other's practice. I soon came to realise how much of police work involved responding to mental health matters (even if it was not quite the '70% of our time' that one officer once quoted at me),

and how it was held in stark relief by all to the more celebrated, 'traditional' aspects of policing. As an area that did not fit with officers' self-conceptions or sense of mission, or correspond to their most celebrated skill-sets, dealing with mental health issues in the absence of other more specialist services was often experienced as frustrating and demoralising. And I too sometimes experienced what I recorded as 'disappointment' in my fieldnotes at the prospect of having to respond to such incidents, knowing they would likely occupy us for several hours and prevent us from engaging in something more exhilarating. However, this does not detract from the observation that in some situations I felt able to assess and reject certain practice models as inappropriate and/or ineffectual approaches for dealing with people. It might be argued that there was little officers could have done for the man under the car, in terms of immediate assistance, but that is not a justification for extending little sympathy for his plight.

Following on from the previous chapter's identification of the transmission of cultural perspectives on other social actors within the criminal justice system, my experiences gave me examples to substantiate feelings of difference in line with colleagues'. Externally to the police, I had my first encounter with a defence solicitor, coming away feeling scorned and slighted by his interruptions and condemnations of our approach in the interview. It was hard not to feel personally opposed to him, in line with the image of disruption and defiance often ascribed to such protagonists by cop culture (Holdaway, 1983), even though I reflected that he was only performing to his own adversarial 'working personality'. Internally to the police, I was also provided examples of the overly critical, fault-finding positioning of CID officers towards response work. On one occasion two CID officers dismantled a statement that had been written by a colleague with utter disparagement, mockingly picking through the weaknesses that they perceived, and in front of a several other members of the team. At the time I felt quite defensive and put out by their attitude, which was received very negatively by the team, fitting the mould that colleagues had already set for them.

But there is one element of internal opposition that needs to be covered in detail here, because of its impact on my experience of socialisation. This relates to the relationship between regular officers and the Special Constabulary, which often featured as an element of *us/them*, and which I had to negotiate as both an insider and an outsider. As I mentioned previously, regular colleagues made it very clear how the Special Constabulary was generally perceived, and what kinds of trainees they were prepared to assist in inducting. As my training progressed, the frankness with which they

shared observations on the competency of other Specials, especially those in supervisory positions, became more pronounced. Whilst some were prepared to acknowledge the usefulness in training Specials to assist the team with supporting functions *in theory*, many were sceptical about the standards of people accepted into training, and questioned the suitability of senior Specials to preside over selecting who would be appropriate. Here one officer summarises the popular opinion:

> *If Specials are going to be put on duty to do response work, he says, or stuff which is demanding, then they have to be trained up properly, and they have to be capable of doing it. Specials have the same uniform as us, he declares, so the public don't know that that person is a Special, who could also be just out of training school. Those Specials that aren't up to task, either in terms of being able to handle themselves adequately (even though they're new) or in terms of not wanting to get involved and help out, essentially devalue the uniform, he declares quite forthrightly. There are some Specials who are really good and who become part of the teams, he continues, but there are lots that aren't, and don't. Some of them just want to come in and shout at people, he continues dismissively, and some of them want to come in and just stand around in the uniform, and be able to tell their friends that they're police officers, but without ever actually contributing or doing anything useful. He's on a bit of a rant now, and he explains how if you're a regular and your tutor or sergeant says you're not good enough then you're out, gone, unless you can seriously turn it around. But if you're a Special it's not like that, he offers. You don't have to prove you're good enough in the same way, he says. There's no way of getting rid of them. [This conversation shows the officer opening up about Specials in a way that he has not done before. He has expressed these kinds of attitudes previously, but not nearly as strongly/frankly. I suppose he thinks now that I know what kind of Special the team think I am, and that I won't be offended by such comments (because they don't relate to me).]*

This later part is important to include because it reflects a common feature of my experience, of regular officers openly denigrating Specials in my presence, whether that be specific individuals, or the institution itself. The fact that it was done so openly in front of me alongside other very inclusive gestures and behaviour demonstrated an acceptance that I was different. One officer even declared half-way through my training that I was already much more useful and better at talking to people

than a Special supervisor he had worked with, and yet he had been signed off for solo-patrol as formally competent.

The following extract is revealing of my orientation to this aspect of *us/them*:

> *There has been a Specials operation running contemporaneously with the NTE operation tonight, called NTE+. Rather than just join in with the regulars and be part of the normal deployment, these Specials supposedly have special taskings and things to look out for (licencing checks, street robberies), although they often were being asked to deal with normal NTE incidents, and often the low grade ones (I think comms have them earmarked for this kind of thing). The opinion of the regular officers around me was pretty dismissive of this kind of partitioning, questioning the effectiveness of what these officers could achieve; one wondered to me why they didn't just join in with the regular operation, suggesting that they just wanted to go off 'playing police officers' on their own. In fact, the effectiveness of Specials themselves was pretty much at the forefront of most opinions shared. One Special in particular, recently promoted to a Special Inspector, was often lambasted as a joke. Regulars avowedly refused to acknowledge his rank as significant, proclaiming that he could fuck off if he thought he had any capital with/over them because of it. When looking at photos from the recent rewards and recognition evening* **[I was nominated for my part in dealing with a suicidal woman on a bridge]***, the others joked that I was the only one who looked remotely normal, and that some of them just looked like children.*
>
> *In truth, when they were in the office the other Specials did sit on desks away from the rest of the officers, very much separated from everyone. This certainly didn't aid any sense of integration or cohesion. I wonder if this is because they don't feel comfortable amongst the regulars, or because they just prefer to sit alone. At one stage towards the end of the shift I walked passed them, and one of the Specials teased me for not joining in with them. Are we not good enough for you then? he wondered jestingly with a goofy smile. I guess they probably know this is the truth on some level. I certainly do.*

This extract shows the 'no man's land' that I occupied, having rejected my Special colleagues in favour of my regular ones, and yet unable to completely integrate with them because of the nature

of my role. No doubt this rejection was due in part to my awareness of how other Specials were perceived and my desire to achieve gratification with regular officers as part of an additional anticipatory socialisation experience. But it also stemmed from my own experiences of working alongside Specials during my training.

These experiences were few (one 'NTE+' operation and one 'neighbourhood' operation), mainly because I tried to avoid them on the advice of regular colleagues concerned about the potential for me to be trained incorrectly. On both occasions I was instructed to volunteer by Specials supervisors, against my protestations, because they were either attended by dignitaries or part of a national volunteer week of action. And on both occasions, I was crewed with 'experienced' Specials, authorised for solo-patrol. Yet working with these officers left me generally on edge, unconvinced that they had the operational nous to deal with challenges we might face. On the NTE+ operation, my initial crewmate, Matfield, even admitted this much to me, declaring that he did not do much operational policing any more, and so was out of touch with recent procedural changes. Responding to my joke that if we got into a foot chase that my hat would fall off, he puffed his cheeks out and declared he hoped we did not get in any foot chases full stop, that he just wanted a very quiet shift. On the neighbourhood operation I was initially crewed with Basson:

> *As we go I chat to Basson and suss out that he is very odd, seems to have minimal communication skills, likes to talk to himself, berates anyone on the road (from inside the van anyway) for whatever he considers to be illegal/foolish driving, comments on whatever is happening on the radio as if he is an expert on policing, and generally comes across as a complete twerp (although he probably means well). He does nothing to succour my sense of exposure and only makes it worse. I would dread having to respond to an incident with him, even though he is supposedly authorised for solo patrol. He is the kind of Special I can imagine regulars hating.*

On neither occasion was I put on the spot thankfully, and I witnessed very little policing being carried out. Matfield simply wanted to walk about, affirming that we were 'helping to make people feel safe' by doing so. Whereas Basson simply wanted to drive about, although I am not sure what he thought we were achieving.

Exaggerated sense of mission

As has been recognised throughout, a Special's sense of occupational identity is a complex one. Whilst Specials look the part and can play the part (in theory), that does not necessitate that they are able to fully claim the cultural imagery of the police as crime-fighter/social guardians for themselves. After all, they are *only* volunteering. And consideration of one's mission ought to honestly reflect one's competency to fulfil that. In this regard, the moderate skill sets attained by the end of my training meant that I was no crime-fighter/social protector, although I could make myself useful to the real things. But how much is being a police officer really about this anyway?

During the course of my shifts I was actively involved (to a greater or lesser extent) in the types of incidents that *could* sustain such a cultural identity. For instance, my tutor and I located an 8-year-old boy who had been missing for some time and had every spare officer in the city looking for him. On another occasion I took a lead role in convincing a girl with mental health problems to come down from the side of a bridge that she was threatening to jump from. I also attended to some serious incidents, such as the GBH on the now one-eared bouncer mentioned above. But these were very much the exception. I was far more likely to attend to shop lifters, low level RTCs, or burglaries discovered long after the offender had been and gone. I never got involved in car chases, or even foot chases. As my experiences of policing stacked up, so too did my appreciation of the reality; that most deployments offer little prospect of action or exhilaration, or opportunities to positively intervene in others' social situations (Charman, 2017).

In many ways my experiences were representative of regular officers, as I took part in their daily business by tagging along to their shifts. But over the course of 14 months, I only attended a small fraction of their total shifts. When I was not there, officers on my team responded to fatal stabbings, undertook covert deployments, attended large scale disorders, and apprehended criminals of every variety.[23] Therefore, at the end of my training, my stock of experiences offered comparatively even fewer examples of 'real policing' (Van Maanen, 1975) to substantiate any claims of being a TV super-cop.

[23] Often these incidents seemed to happen within one or two shifts of me coming in for duty, much to my frustration!

This point links into a further source of regular officer cynicism will be briefly addressed in this section, because it points to revealing disparities in how Specials and regulars are able to make the link between work and cultural perspectives in this regard. It relates to the frustration of being denied the chance to live out a role that fitted with the exaggerated sense of mission. As my experiences of policing amassed, and I became more confident in the role, I sometimes experienced frustration or disappointment when dispatched to jobs that would not offer any of the culturally celebrated elements that officers associate with their role, and which I often sought after. On occasions I too felt resentment towards the administrative commitments required of some incidents and wanted to get back 'out there' in case something more exciting was lying in wait. This naivety waned, although did not completely disappear, as I came to the end of my training and could better read the pace of station life and the likelihood of such events occurring. I became more content, as colleagues advised that I would, that there was no great rush, and everything had to be dealt with in its own time. I generally very much enjoyed my experiences as a Special, and whilst I often found myself chasing the prospect of a dealing with a 'big job', I still found a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction in the real police work (the unexaggerated reality) that we did perform.

The fact remains that those Specials who do not, who become cynical about their position for this reason and start to express frustration towards it, will get no sympathy. Because as a volunteer you can leave any time. There are none of the employment factors that regular officers must consider (wage, pension, security, etc.). If the disparity between reality and cultural wistfulness is too great, then there is only one option. Cynicism in this regard will not be tolerated in volunteers, and neither can it be self-reflexively sustained.

4. Discussion – needs fulfilled?

The previous section explored my socialisation experience by reviewing the extent to which I was aligned to the four main tenets of police culture by the end of my training. I attempted to do this by assessing the degree to which these fundamental cultural perspectives were substantiated by my experiences of police work, as opposed to just being absorbed from regular colleagues. In the case

of my sense of mission, my shifts increasingly revealed the disparity between the crime-fighter/social guardian ideology and the realities of policing, which matched the lowered expectations set by regular officers during my initial encounters, revealing the great contradiction at the heart of police culture. Self-awareness of my own limited abilities also tempered any attempts to over-reach the occupational identity I could justifiably assume. Regarding cynicism, my collated experiences moved me towards a more sceptical, resigned perspective on society and the police role within it. Whilst my outlooks shifted in line with regular officers in some cases, they did not map completely. Considering the masculine ethos of police culture, my relationship to risk and danger was conditioned late on by significant events that pushed me towards a more grounded understanding of the cultural inclination towards defensiveness. I also recognised the integrative effects of demonstrating acceptance of stock methods. Finally, regarding the oppositional elements of police culture, I gratefully received those gestures of acceptance that were extended to me as part of the 'us' and sought further assimilation with the regular ranks. My experiences sustained a wariness towards some of the groups of actors that colleagues set themselves at a distance from, including other Specials, and recognising the reasons for this brought me closer still.

This thesis has sought to chart the socialisation experience by focusing on needs fulfilment in new members as a central driver of enculturation. Analytic discussion on the three core needs of identity, control, and acceptance already tracks through this chapter in the background, but I will address them directly here to provide some concluding remarks on my training experience.

Identity

I have touched on aspects of my identity in the discussion above, and the conflict shown in several areas should be clear to see. As a Special I sought to align myself with the regular ranks, a position that was compounded by my application to join them full-time, although I was not approved in the role until after my last shift. Therefore, whilst my aspiration was confirmed, my occupational standing was still undecided; the status elevation was on hold (Conti, 2006). As a Special, I could only take so much from the cultural orientation of regular officers to their own role and identity. But from the confirmation through experience of some of the stock cultural wisdom on the policing environment, I was able to sustain a self-justified sense of insider status, however fluid.

In the previous chapter I discussed how trainees develop their early identity and sense of purpose around assisting their colleagues, as opposed to assisting members of the public, and in doing so generate affiliation to the 'us'. This stems from a recognition of the occupational value placed in mutual support, togetherness, and solidarity. But it also issues from the lack of interactions that Specials undertake with members of the public during their early training, as opposed to watching their tutors/colleagues do so. As I developed proficiency in these tasks and an awareness of police procedures, I was able to undertake more meaningful encounters with people, performing tasks that supported regular colleagues but also directly contributed to our provision of 'public service'. Whilst those incidents of doing so as crime-fighter/social guardian were minimal, where I proved a basic proficiency in this regard, I felt a very strong sense of self-worth and belonging. But even performing more basic actions such as taking witness statements, giving advice, or providing first aid contributed to an establishing sense of self as both regulars' assistant and public servant. The occasions where I was assumed to be a regular officer affirmed the worth of my volunteering by sustaining an external identity, which appeased some of my internal status anxiety.

However, my sense of identity was also shaped by a growing appreciation and acceptance of my deferential status, understanding that my hopes and expectations of the role were secondary to organisational requirements. I came to realise that it is sometimes the 'lot of the Special', where working with response teams, to find yourself getting bored or mildly frustrated as regular colleagues complete their necessary activities, not always able to afford you the time for development opportunities within their daily business. Allied to this was the disappointment felt when sometimes assigned to incidents that were less stimulating, which regulars are resigned to as a fact of life, but which trainees take time to acknowledge and accept – longer than regular recruits because their experiences are much less frequent.

This point is important, because it feeds into wider discussions on the motivations for volunteering in this arena, and the realism required for successful integration with regular ranks. It may be that some novice trainees are overly focussed on 'thrill-seeking' as a driver for undertaking the role, as the fieldnotes reveal I was to a certain extent. Volunteering to do the less 'sexy work', in police parlance, may rankle with some trainees' instrumental motivations for putting on the uniform. But if frustration in this regard drives them away from the work of regular ranks, and into the body of

Specials-only deployments, they are likely to experience those incidents even less, as well as generating distance from their regular colleagues.

Control

By the end of my training experience I had achieved a solid grounding in many processes and procedures, which I could accomplish with minimal supervision and apparently to good effect. Indeed, towards the end of my training I intervened in a physical altercation between ex-partners on the road outside my house; off duty, unequipped, unprepared, and a little hung over. I managed to separate the parties, calm the situation, obtain witness details, and give a handover to officers when they eventually attended. This required various interactive and communicative skills, and awareness of appropriate procedures. Reflecting on my handling of the incident, I was reassured by my application to the situation after twelve months of active deployments. And yet, I still required a significant amount of support and direction when dealing with other situations. During my final shift, prior to getting assaulted, my fieldnotes record my feelings of being 'directionless' and a 'spare part' as I attempted to assist other officers in resolving a large disturbance, reflecting that there was 'still an awful long way to go before I would be able to apply myself efficiently' to such situations.

Although it was clear that my field experiences exposed me very directly to the working practices of regular colleagues, the extent to which I was able to grasp their underlying principles in the midst of contingent situational considerations was hampered by my lack of exposure and ability to practice for myself. But in some areas, it was also affected by my biography and perspective on criminal justice matters. Take for instance my comprehension of working strategies for detention and arrest that some officers deployed. Initially I was confused by the move to detain people that sometimes occurred outside of the formal process of arrest being completed, which requires the arrested person be immediately told the grounds for their arrest, cautioned, and given reasons as to why their arrest is necessary. This working rule was explained to me as a basic practical measure, even in situations were the subject of detention was presenting no obvious threat. The initial operating concern was to affect control over the situation, and then to work out how to resolve the matter, but I struggled to reconcile this with the required statutory procedures (probably because it could not be!). This was compounded by my lack of awareness of the working rules that suggest how the

necessity criteria for arrest might be fulfilled; when and why it is culturally appropriate to arrest someone, and how this can be justified within the guidelines of Code G of PACE.

My initial difficulty in reconciling informal practice with formal obligations was strongly affected by my championing of the rule of law, and the procedural unease I felt at circumnavigating basic legal rights and due process. But as I became more familiar with my surroundings, learning about the environment from experience and insight, this stance was lessened somewhat. I was more willing to entertain the operating concerns of some colleagues founded in attributions of guilt and informal conceptions of summary justice (Sanders et al., 2008), especially where the subjects of our attention were 'regular customers' who clearly had more familiarity with aspects of the system than I did! Whilst I mastered little *control* or proficiency in this regard, cultural perspectives on the impracticalities and unnecessariness of formal wording mixed with grounded insight on the lived reality of many subjects of police attention. These factors gradually lessened my sense of procedural unease at the working practice of others, but I still strived to find a practical application of these powers for myself that adhered to statute and yet worked in the field; something I was unable to master as a Special.

Thinking about control as influence over other members, by the end of my training I was able to gain some traction with some members of my team, and take an active part in strategizing how some incidents could be resolved. Where this happened, such as investigating a potential sexual assault on a vulnerable female that I had identified, I felt buoyed and endorsed, and became further integrated. I suggest this was founded in their assessments of my comprehension of the basic aspects of the operating ideology, and a willingness to extend trust as a result. But where other officers did not know me, coming from other teams or stations, I was often shut out of decision-making or just ignored. Such situations were processed without any great status anxiety, however, being self-aware of my standing and the reputation of Specials in general. I had to accept that for some officers I would remain part of 'them' until I could prove to them also that I was worth considering as part of 'us'.

Acceptance

Considering my need for security, it was clear that I found a great deal of comfort and support in the attempts made by my colleagues to assist my learning throughout my training and welcome me into their world. As I became a repeat presence at the station, and my usefulness became more apparent, I was made to feel ever more included. My early indications of wanting to join the regulars, followed by my eventual application, set out a stall which satisfied their conditions for facilitating my initiation. Whilst it was clear that I would never become a core member, I was able to feel part of the wider team. My gradual alignment towards cultural perspectives on certain sections of society, and my growing general acceptance of the way policing tasks were undertaken, established bonds of membership that made me feel secure and supported.

I have discussed above how a condition of my acceptance was my affiliation to the regular officer body, over that of the Special Constabulary. The observations and proclamations of regular officers on their volunteer colleagues as a whole encouraged me to distance myself from other Specials who were not accepted or included by the regular ranks, and who generated animosity and frustration. Setting out to treat my training experiences as an additional stage of anticipatory socialisation for the status elevation to regular officer granted access to an intense street-learning experience, facilitated with openness and a great degree of support. And whilst humour was sometimes used to reaffirm my different membership status, it was also employed by others to confer their acceptance of my presence and my intentions.

5. A Special police culture?

This chapter has attempted to capture a feel for learning in the field as a Special, tracing my development as a volunteer officer as I moved towards the end of the training programme. Although I did not 'complete' all the sections required in the assessment portfolio, I surpassed the minimum amount of training time required by the organisation. And as colleagues confirmed, I had achieved

a greater understanding and proficiency in police practice than many other Specials who had already completed the programme.

My socialisation journey followed a particular path, strongly influenced by my instrumental, egoistic motivations for undertaking this volunteer experience. Accepted by the regular officers I apprenticed myself to, I went about constructing an occupational identity that set me apart from other Specials, attempting to develop as much control in terms of operational competence as possible (but establishing little headway in general). In some respects, this drew me towards identifying strongly with aspects of the occupational culture, accepting working practices and general dispositions that had not initially appealed to me. And yet in other areas I was able to question the practice of others against a consideration of the type of officer I wanted to become.

I suggested above that the ending of the training programme is not a point at which one can properly consider a metamorphosis in the socialisation of Specials. The Special trainee has not had enough time in the field by this stage to fully appreciate the bounds of the police officer role or the occupational culture that accompanies it. But to what extent can Specials truly undergo a metamorphosis in the sense that it applies to regulars and their experiences of socialisation, whose peers are the custodians of the dominant ideology of frontline police work?

Charman suggests that metamorphosis relates to the 'coping mechanisms and strategies which the new recruit adopts in order to be able to continue with the job, to assimilate and function as a member of the organisational culture, and importantly, to be perceived to be functioning according to the normative beliefs and attitudes of the group' (2017: 110). The task for Specials is formidable here. For not only must they negotiate their innate difference in social capital, trying to understand and assimilate aspects of a working identity that regular counterparts remain deeply protective over, they must also demonstrate rounded competence in the informal practices of their regular peers and convince them that they have established the correct framing devices.

This chapter and the last have presented evidence which suggests that regular officers do not, in general, feel wiling or able to confer acceptance on Specials as functioning members of the occupational culture, a finding also returned by Westmarland (2016). Specials do not develop operational competence to acceptable standards, and they do not see the policing world through the requisite perspectives. In this study they were often seen as 'uniform fillers', 'playing

policemen', causing problems for regular officers rather than meaningfully contributing to the workload of the frontline. From the regulars' perspectives, they had not, as a collective, demonstrated the right kinds of 'coping mechanisms and strategies' to properly assimilate and function as part of their culture. And yet Specials do remain in their roles. Even though there is a significant turnover of officers (Whittle, 2017), some continue to volunteer for many years.

This research study ends perhaps just as things get (even more) interesting. It cannot answer the question of what happens to Specials once they reach the end of their training programme and then start to chart the course of their ongoing development without the structure of the tutorship phase. This is a crucial period in the socialisation of regular officers, where they experiment with working practice in the field on their own and with other officers (Fielding, 1988; Chan, 2003). Where Specials decide to move away from working alongside regulars and into Specials-only deployments, as often happened in Westshire, they will no longer continue their apprenticeship into the occupational culture. But they will still have a cultural grounding of sorts. This study suggests that regular officers are prepared to open aspects of their world to volunteer officers during the tutorship phase, teaching working rules and conveying the core themes of the operating ideology. Those specials that choose to stay aligned to their regular colleagues may continue along this trajectory, potentially establishing a level of functionality and a working personality that they and their regular colleagues are comfortable with. But I suggest this will be an inherently difficult task, because both the Specials themselves and their regular peers will have to recognise the attainment of a common occupational identity, which is at the same time grounded by their volunteer status.

Those Specials that choose to work away from their regular peers may do so because they reviewed and rejected the practice models on display during their tutorship phase, and could not find a fit with the operating ideology. Or they may have been pushed away, because of the lack of fit that their regular colleagues saw. Working away from regular officer oversight, they may go on to develop their own subculture, derived from their regular peers', but adapted to meet their relationship to the policing world. I have very limited data on this, but it is possible to sketch out some possible features.

During my early encounter, I undertook an 'orientation shift' with a number of senior specials, all of whom had been solo-authorised for several years, and mainly worked with each other or other

Specials. Over the course of the shift, they revealed their own sense of mission in which public service was at the forefront, but so too was supporting the work of the regulars. They felt that the volume of work that they achieved was significant, but was wholly unrecognised, by either their regular peers or regular senior management. This generated a distinctive mixture of pride, frustration, and cynicism, where on the one hand they were doing their regular colleagues a great service, and yet on the other had to accept it would never be fully acknowledged (sound familiar?). They displayed a typical wariness and cynical stance towards some of the 'regular customers' that we came across, showing a working awareness of the criminal justice system and its various inhabitants. They also showed compassion and sensitivity when dealing with people in distress, and yet recognised the points at which it was culturally acceptable to find humour in others' predicaments. Where incidents presented the possibility for drama and intrigue, they were quick to (try and) assist, but where others were more routine, they showed a lack of willingness (and confidence) to explore the circumstances.

On one occasion, having seen a car with a faulty rear light, the Specials excitedly sped up behind it, running a check on the registration. When the dispatcher returned that she could not find details for the vehicle (a Nissan Micra or similar), one of the Specials exclaimed 'I don't like the look of this one mate….' in a wary tone, then repeated by the others. The driver of our car tried to get the subject vehicle to pull over, gesturing frantically with hand signals, horn, and sirens until it did so. It transpired that the car was being driven by a very pleasant middle-aged woman. The light started to work upon further inspection, and the registration was located on the system after all. But the driver was warned that she needed to get the light fixed and that another officer might not be so kind to her. One Special cautioned that he would put a marker on our systems against her name and the car, and if she was stopped again for the same reason, she would get a ticket. As we drove away, I enquired into this process being unaware of it. The officer admitted with a chuckle that he had bent the truth slightly, and that we had no way of recording such information. But it might make her get it fixed, he offered, which was ultimately what he wanted her to do.

The features of this incident suggest a very different focus and approach to that which regulars might take. The excited interest in the rear light, and the subsequent concern over the unreturned registration (without any additional unsettling factors), both reveal contrasting starting positions from regular colleagues. So too the utilisation of a distinctive truth-bending tactic that has no place

in a regular's toolkit. Coupled with the observations above, it could be contended that these officers were operating within their own orientation to the policing landscape. Whilst they displayed many elements of the regular working culture, they had also developed a shared set of dispositions and perspectives, and demonstrated some practices, that were unique to their shared sense of identity, outside of the dominant cultural code. In the following chapter I will expand on these observations and suggest how further research might seek to explore this aspect further.

Chapter 8

Conclusion
On Special Constables

This study has considered one police force, snapshot at one period in time. It initially followed one cohort of trainees, further slimmed down to a much-reduced sample during the next stage of development, and then reduced again to a single case study on the subsequent experiences of socialisation. The force in question had its own model of training, which although similar to most others across England and Wales, had its own particular variations. All of these factors need to be borne in mind when considering the reach and potential impact of the analysis put forward in this thesis. Still, it is contended that the research picture on the Special Constabulary is now more detailed than it was before, and the wider field of policing studies has also been updated.

The original contribution of this project has been to examine the organisational socialisation of Special Constables. Through an exploration of the training of these volunteer police officers – looking at both *what* they learn, and *how* they learn - we begin to see the ways in which Specials are defined by their relations to the many others they come into contact with during this formative period in their early careers. They are defined by their relation to regular officers, who they learn from and work alongside. They are defined by their relation to members of the public, who they both serve and represent. And they are defined by their relation to other Specials, who have signed up for the same volunteering experience. And yet each of these relations is embedded with conflict and inconsistency.

In relation to regular officers, who are charged with inducting them into the policing fold, the Special is in some respects identical, but in others very separate. They wear the same uniform and carry the same symbolic capital. They have recourse to the same powers and legal authorities. And they are subject to the same standards and expectations of conduct and professionalism. But they are not subject to the same standards and expectations of performance or organisational responsibility.

They do not develop or apply their craft in the same way. And they are not responsible for sustaining or maintaining the dominant operating ideology of frontline policing.

In relation to members of the public, the Special Constabulary purportedly exists to form a bridge between the police and the community, and yet many Specials have ulterior egoistic motivations, which contradict their institutional mantra. Whilst Specials are required to see themselves as different from the citizen body, they are still routinely reminded of their volunteer status, accustomed to remain on the outside by the structural conditions of the 'regular-centric' world of policing (Britton and Callender, 2017). Their status elevation leaves them in limbo; required to behave professionally in and out of uniform, and yet not professionals like their regular colleagues, unable to assume the full occupational persona as their defining identity. The 'ontological transformation' (Waquant, 1995) from civilian to officer can never be fully realised for a volunteer.

In relation to other Specials, whilst they all give up their time for free, a range of motivations bring them to the volunteering experience. Where these do not align, differing expectations will shadow their respective experiences, and lead to differing levels of satisfaction or frustration depending on the extent to which they are fulfilled. Within their ranks, Specials will seek associations with each other and with regular officers to different degrees, but their starting position in the eyes of regular officers will be set by general impressions of their collective performance. Those Specials seeking assimilation may have to work hard to defeat a reputation that often proceeds them.

All this goes to say that becoming a Special Constable is a difficult business, as trainees look to negotiate a complex set of relational demands and find a fit with both culture and practice. This fit, I have argued, is driven by the fulfilment of three fundamental needs. But the ways in which these needs are fulfilled, and the accompanying extent to which trainees are able to accept a certain level of status anxiety regarding their bounds of their membership, will depend on the individual and their motivations for becoming Special. To get to this point, this study proceeded over four phases of socialisation, and each will be briefly recapped below.

Entry

A cursory glimpse of the recruitment and selection phase of Specials revealed that applicants to the training programme may be confronted by an image of policing in the mould of traditional cop culture, highlighting the action-orientated elements of the role that reinforce the masculine ethos and exaggerated sense of mission. That Senior Specials choose to propound this when such an image does not typically represent the work of regular officers, and represents the work of Specials even less, is both revealing and concerning. It suggests that the occupational culture is accessible to volunteers, in that they can recognise and replicate some of its basic features when promoting their role, and in doing so sustain their own misguided sense of operational identity. But it also presents a version of the role that some applicants may be put off by, and could be deterring a section of the volunteering populous who would approach the experience with altruistic interests and intentions. However, it was also noted how significant numbers of applicants readily digest such presentations of the role and the purported operational identity that goes with it. Many of these individuals will look upon the experience of Specialing as a stepping-stone to regular recruitment, or at least a means to test the water first. And to these applicants, the same expectations of excitement and adventure that the regular role is anticipated to bring are carried across to their anticipation of the volunteer role in the first instance.

Introduction

The training school experience, the 'academy phase', is derived from that which aims to prepare regular recruits for the live environment, but is necessarily slimmed down and scaled back to accommodate the training of volunteer workers. Those convening the course must balance the need to provide trainees with a basic understanding of police powers and procedures, against several considerations on how to engage and motivate volunteer officers through an intense but protracted learning experience. Success here is hard to achieve. Some trainees develop resentment towards the learning requirement from a very early stage, impatient to get out of the classroom and onto the streets, even though they have barely scratched the surface of the role they have applied for. Differing degrees of application are shown towards the course, with some trainees aware of their ignorance of foundational theory, and keen to address this. But others are simply ignorant of the

commitments they have undertaken, and remain this way throughout. Yet the academy phase can simply be endured if trainees are inclined to approach it that way. Here there are no formal assessments to test knowledge acquisition or validate basic proficiency. The course is essentially pass or pass, unless the behaviour on display is so aberrant that it cannot meet the exacting requirements of the office of (Special) Constable (as these are sold to trainees).

Trainers approach this formative period from a range of perspectives. Some seek to impose a strict regime of compliance and conformity, achieving variable levels of success, and in some instances fostering resentment and disenchantment. Others take a more supportive approach, coaching the volunteers with moderated expectations of uptake. After all, these officers-to-be have not had to meet the same standards of regular trainees presenting for their introduction to the policing family. Indeed, whilst at the training school this status disparity is reinforced for trainees where several are informed that they are good enough to undertake the role on a part-time, unpaid basis, but not good enough for the status elevation to full-time employee. And yet, great effort is extended by experienced members to incorporate these novices within the policing fold, inducting them through formal and informal initiation ceremonies and rites of passage. Crucially, trainers also show a willingness to sketch the bounds of the police officer's 'working personality' for trainees, conveying the core themes of the informal occupational culture as an accompaniment to the formal curriculum and its timetable of lessons.

Encounter

Eventually let out of the classroom and sent out to their stations, trainees negotiate the gap between the abstract role and the reality with varying success, dependent on a range of personal and environmental factors. Some establish strong bonds of association and productive rapports with regular colleagues which facilitate a supportive, participatory learning process. But they must work hard to do this, especially were they do not have the career-driven motivations that establish kinship much quicker. Where trainees have tutors that are initially wary, or where they have not tutor at all, they must adapt to this, showing patience and resolve. Similarly, when confronted with the physical, emotional, and mental demands of the role, trainees must learn to process their gathering

experiences alongside a grounded awareness of their allotted (bottom) rung on the ladder. For some, these reality shocks may be too challenging to overcome.

Learning in the field is a very different beast to learning at the training school, and trainees may apply additional resentment to the lost weekends of the academy phase for not providing them with a greater practical nous. They learn from experienced members, and see the value in this, much like their regular colleagues once did. But their development is not afforded the same organisational priority or oversight, and it must be managed within the constraints and commitments of the rest of their lives, sometimes having to take a backseat on two fronts. But continuing the process started in the classroom, trainees accumulate a wealth of cultural wisdom on the role they have apprenticed themselves to. The four core themes of the dominant culture are fleshed out and given added meaning, and a raft of informal working strategies begin to emerge through the dynamic of their 'tutorship'. Trainees learn about the culture and its associated customs by watching and observing their colleagues in the front-stages and back-stages of practice and performance, where distinguishing between the two is of critical importance. They gather insight and experiences, but draw heavily on the former for the guiding principles on how to act and how to see themselves. And in these early days of development, war stories offer themselves as a convenient cultural device for extending the bounds of their own experience by collating and reviewing the anecdotes and escapades of others, decoding their surface and latent messages. The impracticalities of formal training are quickly held in stark relief to 'the way things are done' and this is mainly processed without much concern, as an obvious fact of life. Recognition of this draws trainees closer into the fold, and the core themes of the culture are readily reaffirmed as trainees learn to see the world from the inside out.

Metamorphosis

As a trainee's encounters with the policing environment gradually accumulate, and they adapt to learning in the field, there is scope to engage with the perspectives and practices of the operating ideology to a greater or lesser extent. The four themes of the culture may come closer to the fore in the way the trainee sees the world, sometimes through experience confirming cultural positionings, and sometimes through cultural wisdom explaining experience. Whilst a trainee can

become the Special they want to be, confirming or rejecting practice models, the slide towards cultural conformity may happen in ways that were not initially anticipated. Undertaking the experience with a further status elevation in mind will pull and push a trainee in different directions as they try and negotiate an agreeable working profile for themselves. Their search for acceptance may draw them to the working personality of their regular colleagues, and whilst they may not have enough time to learn how to operate within the ideology, they should at least know how to joke about it.

The ending of the training programme (where it occurs) represents a significant event in the early career development of Specials. The completion of the tutorship phase and the authorisation of independent patrol confers additionally significant social capital. But it is not a signifier of occupational, informal competence. It is not a metamorphosis in the sense of bringing about the end of a trainees' initial socialisation into the police (to the extent that this can be achieved anyway). I have also suggested that it is not necessarily a marker of formal competence either.

Areas for further investigation

This study set out to qualitatively explore the training programme for Specials with a view to opening up the research site. Having done so, two areas appear in need of further research. Chief among these is the glaring absence of female voices on the tutorship phase of the training programme. Whilst the research is revealing on many fronts, the lack of gender insight reduces its impact. For female Specials made up 30% of the volunteer workforce in 2018 (Hargreaves et al., 2018). Callender et al. suggest that in their first two years of service this group of volunteers are 'significantly less likely [than male trainees] to feel that they were being sufficiently supported in their role' (2018:27). This study has been unable to explore this important finding, but the absence of female voices during this period of induction is telling in itself. It is silent on how female trainees process the shift between the training school and the frontline, and how they go about trying to develop competence in the field. Do they assimilate themselves with culture and practice in the same way? How do they respond to the masculine ethos that sets the tone for perspectives and practice? Which aspects of the operational identity do they conform to, and which elements cause the most conflict? Do they feel accepted in a working culture still defined in many ways by its gender

imbalance? These questions will be important to investigate to form a rounded picture of this process.

As discussed in the previous chapter, another area which immediately presents itself at the conclusion of this study is the ongoing development of Specials after they have finished the training programme. Once free to undertake independent patrol, it is not clear from the literature what happens next: whether solo-authorised Specials tend to keep regular company, or to patrol with other Specials, or mix the two. If they stay with regular officer teams, they are likely to experience a growing familiarity with working practices and perspectives derived from the dominant operating ideology. But if they move away from this to Specials-only deployments, their practice will develop in a very different direction, and a specific Special subculture may appear. Therefore, study of this subfield is needed to understand the specific detail of deployments that Specials undertake post-training programme. This must go beyond the range of the current data, which mainly classifies shift activity in terms of mobile patrol, foot patrol, community events, neighbourhood policing, etc. (Bullock and Leeney, 2016; Callender et al., 2018). It must uncover who continues to work with regular officers, why this is the case, and what happens in their ongoing development of formal and informal competence. It also must uncover who decides to go it alone, again exploring why, and considering the different paths that their development might take. Of course, there will be those who move between these two basic positions, volunteering for a range of shifts and activities, and their experiences and expectations will be equally revealing. Only from gathering and interrogating a range of perspectives on this aspect of the volunteering experience can we really assess the kind(s) of metamorphosis that Specials will undergo.

Suggestions on improving practice

This research endeavour was proposed and conducted from a constructive, collaborative perspective, with the aim of assisting the ongoing development of this important field, as much as it was about delivering critical analysis on a sheltered aspect of practice. As such, at its conclusion, a number of points suggest themselves as potential avenues for improving the overall volunteer experience.

1) The updated literature suggests that 'career Specials', those whose motivations for joining do not include furthering their prospects of regular recruitment, represent the best value for money for constabularies (Whittle, 2014; Whittle, 2017). The routine turnover of trainees seeking full-time employment, either because they join as desired, or they become disenchanted with progress or prospects and leave, reduces the ability of Special Constabularies to cash in on the initial outlay of training and provide a cost-effective supplement to the regular ranks (Hieke, 2017b). However, my research data reveals that some sections of the regular workforce may be sceptical of the motives of such trainees, and thus disinclined to offer them a rounded, integrated learning experience. Therefore, in order to support those trainees who envisage a long-term commitment, it is crucial that they are placed with individuals (as tutors) and within roles that can support this intention. Some forces appear to have recognised this in their recruitment pathway programmes that align volunteers with community policing roles, focussing on local engagement and partnership working. Such a role is suggested to better suit those with altruistic motives (Bullock and Leeney, 2016). However, not all career Specials are of this persuasion. The 'Bobs' of this world instrumentally want excitement and social interaction from their Specialing experiences. Constabularies would do well to ensure that such trainees receive the support and welcome that he did.

2) This study reveals that in some sections of the regular ranks there persists deep-seated resentment towards volunteer officers. Whilst some were seen as a positive addition to the workforce, these were a minority overshadowed by a collective mass of incompetence. This disheartened regular officers who saw the worth of their uniform devalued by their volunteer counterparts, and made them disinclined to encourage integration. Some of this criticism might have been unfounded, exaggerated and elaborated as another form of 'us/them' self-isolating that officers were often observed to practice. But the collated examples of bad policing by Specials that were routinely relayed to me suggests that there was some truth in this. Therefore, in order to enhance the reputation of Specials among the regular ranks, efforts should be invested to increase the basic competence of those making it through to the tutorship phase and beyond. This might involve having to impose minimum standards of performance on those undertaking basic training, denying the status elevation

to the frontline until a foundational awareness of process and practice could be guaranteed. Such a condition might ward off some individuals unwilling to risk the chance of a wasted endeavour, but I suggest that I would also focus attention and application during the training course, as well as reassuring regular officers that only appropriate candidates are attested. Such a condition would also potentially protect those who are simply not yet ready to face policing situations for real, offering them the chance to retrain, or find an alternative role, such as a police support volunteer.

3) Another factor which contributed to additional resentment related to the absence of regular officer involvement in the initial selection process. This was viewed by regulars as a major failing of the recruitment system. Not only was there no perspective on candidate suitability from those who perform the role on a full-time basis, and have a stake in ensuring everyone in uniform can meet minimum standards, but the individuals in charge of overseeing the system were sometimes deemed especially incompetent themselves. There may have been an element of officers being overly protective of their professional standing and perception in the community, which they felt Specials could undermine. But my experiences of entering the organisation as discussed in chapter four again suggest some pertinence to these assessments. Committing to ensure that there is at least some regular officer involvement in the recruitment process, not necessarily from a response rank-and-file perspective, will reassure regulars that is some practical science in selection decisions. And it may also strengthen the quality of candidates being put forward for basic training.

It might be countered that these latter two suggestions are 'regular centric' in their focus, and not fixed on the volunteer experience directly. I suggest in return that careful consideration needs to be given to improve the working relationship between regular officers and Specials, not least because this is often recognised as a significant source of value or frustration on behalf of the volunteers (Britton et al., 2016; Callender et al., 2018). But also because regular officers need to be convinced that the incorporation of Specials is not policing 'on the cheap' (Bullock and Leeney, 2016), especially at a time when their morale is being ever reduced in a period of staff reductions and increasing demand (Eliott-Davies et al., 2016).

Final thoughts

Readers might feel that much of what is contained in this thesis reaffirms those negative normative appraisals of police culture as insular and downbeat. At times I sketch a picture of isolated and cynical officers, defensive and risk averse, sometimes neglecting to offer basic courtesies, sometimes going beyond this, redirecting powers and policies to meet their own needs. Whilst this is true in part, it is far from the whole story. Generally, officers are very positive about their job, however much they are maligned for being the opposite in relation to certain aspects of it. As one officer once affirmed to me 'you can't not like the job'. Notwithstanding some areas where cultural perspectives and working rules could be re-orientated towards procedural justice (see Bradford et al., 2013) and community engagement, officers typically expend significant time and effort trying to assist people and make them feel more secure (however vague such a proclamation might be). They generally come to work with the best intentions, only to be frustrated in this endeavour by the structural determinants of their environment, which impact on their practice and condition their perspectives (Chan, 1996).

When I entered the field as a trainee I also entered as someone who had begun to engage with the literature on police culture and policing practice. I was aware of many of the background themes that I subsequently chose to help structure this analysis. But when I sought to generate and demonstrate conformity with my regular officer peers at the station, I was not doing so because I had first read about how police officers view the world and the strategies for action they create. I did not profess alignment to the core themes of the dominant culture to act out a part that I had read about. I did so because they started to make sense to me as well.

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Glossary

Term/phase	Meaning
Blue light run	A journey in a police car using the flashing lights and travelling at speed (except in rush hour).
Call sign	The reference code that an officer is given to use over the radio to identify themselves.
Cell extraction	The process for taking a violent detainee into their cell, removing whatever restraining devices are in operation, and allowing all officers to safely retreat.
Code 1	A situation which has been risk assessed for an immediate police response. This phase is often used to describe the manner of driving officers undertake to respond to such situations.
Crew bus	A large van or people carrier, which can hold several officers, and usually contains at least one cell for transporting detained persons.
Crew mate	An officer who is assigned to work alongside another officer for the shift/deployment.
Custodian	The iconic hat which Constables and Sergeants wear in most forces in England and Wales (to the chagrin of most officers).
DO	Detention officer. A civilian member of staff who works in a custody suite, attending to the ~~guests~~ occupants of the cells.
GOWISELY	GOWISELY is the police training mnemonic for remembering the seven things that officers must say to a person, where practicable, when they detain them for a search, according to law. These are Grounds for the search, Object the officer is looking for, show the them your Warrant card if not in uniform, Identify yourself as PC so-and-so, tell them your Station, explain that the person is Entitled to a copy of the search record, tell them the Legislation they are detained under, and inform them 'You are detained' (not necessarily in that order).

Griefy	A ‘job’ which is difficult/unduly laborious to deal with/resolve in some way, usually excessively time consuming, and which is best handed over to the oncoming shift of officers.
Job	A reported incident, situation or spontaneous happening to which officers attend or initiate proactively themselves. Often preceded by ‘good’, ‘nice little’ or ‘shit’, depending on the ~~number of people arrested~~ culturally assessed manner in which it is resolved.
NPT	Neighbourhood Policing Team (also referred to as Community Policing Teams. Or Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Or Neighbourhood Control. Or Pink and Fluffy).
Old Sweat	An older officer, usually a Constable, who remains stubbornly attached to traditional, potentially backward forms of policing. Can’t use computers, rarely makes the tea anymore, and likes to ‘swing the lantern’ (tell stories of yore).
Patch	The geographical area to which an officer is assigned to patrol.
Person-Check	Checking a person’s details on the Police National Computer (PNC). This will advise officers if the person has any warning markers, outstanding court warrants, restraining orders, etc. as well as detailing their history of prosecutions.
Pocket notebook (PNB)	The notebook that all officers must carry and make records of their activities. Alternatively, officers may use the ePNB function in their force-issued mobiles phone if they were born post 1990.
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment – handcuffs, batons, incapacitant spray, tasers, limb restraints, etc.
Turn over	To search (usually refers to an individual or a car).
Welcome party	A group of officers, potentially in riot attire, who are initially used as a show of force on arrival at custody if individuals have been previously uncooperative during their apprehension and initial detention, but are on standby to assist if needed.